the weekly Standard

APRIL 7, 2003 $3.95

DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN, 1927-2003
William Kristol

Waging War, Waging Peace

FRED BARNES: Blair's best friend

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL: Chirac's grand ambition

PETER D. FEAVER: Casualties and public opinion

STEPHEN F. HAYES: Iraqi exiles go to war

MATT LABASH: Babysitting the press in Kuwait

JOSEPH LOCONTE: Pacifist fantasies, then and now

CLAUDIA ROSETT: Oil for food, money for the U.N.

DAVID SKINNER: Saddam's war crimes

TAMARA COFMAN WITTES: Iran miscalculates

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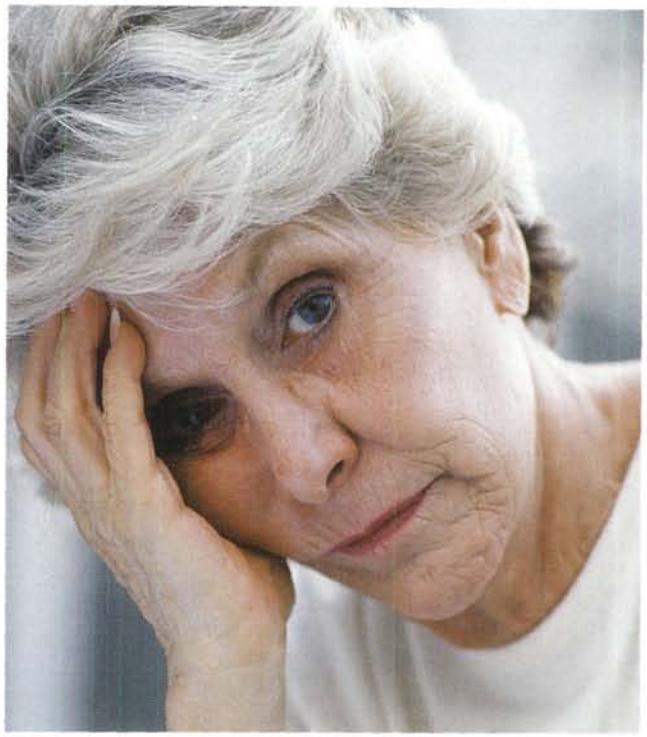
Let Her Sweat?



Power grab by federal regulators puts hometown electricity consumers at risk!

DURING THE HOTTEST HOURS of the summer, parts of the electricity grid reach capacity.

Today, hometown customers—90% of whom are small business or residential ratepayers—stand first in line when transmission is scarce. That's because it was their rate dollars that built and maintained the system.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission wants to change all this. In a topsy-turvy Washington-knows-best scheme, FERC's message to hometown consumers when transmission is tight—**"let 'em sweat."**

That's right, **"let 'em sweat"** … and make way for rogue power traders who don't generate an electron of power.

This is all part of FERC's grandiose regulatory fantasy that would federalize how America buys, sells, and transmits electricity.

It's time for Congress to curb FERC's regulatory enthusiasm. Otherwise, **"let 'em sweat."**

EUSA
Electric Utility Shareholders Alliance

P.O. Box 104595
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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, the second week in July, the third week in August, and the first week in September) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7653 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call John L. Mackall 1-202-496-3354. Copyright 2003, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

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"We are his nemesis"

Britain has its first hero of this war, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins of the Royal Irish Regiment. Collins is heralded not yet for his feats on the battlefield, but for the stirring address to his troops, the regiment's 1st Battalion, on March 19, with battle imminent. As Sarah Oliver of the *Mail on Sunday* reported that night, Collins was "wearing his kukri, the Gurkha blade he is entitled to carry as a Gurkha commander. He spoke to his 800 men, an arm of Britain's 16 Air Assault Brigade, at Fort Blair Mayne, their desert camp just 20 miles from the Iraqi border."

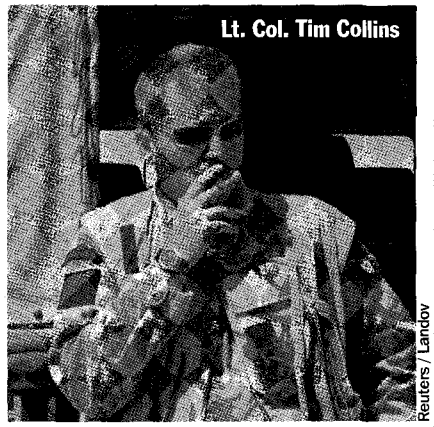
The British have not lost their knack for battlefield eloquence:

"It is my foremost intention to bring every single one of you out alive, but there may be people among us who will not see the end of this campaign. We will put them in their sleeping bags and send them back. There will be no time for sorrow.

"The enemy should be in no doubt that we are his nemesis and that we are bringing about his rightful destruction. There are many regional commanders who have stains on their souls, and they are stoking the fires of hell for Saddam. He and his forces will be destroyed by this coalition for what they have done. As they die they will know their deeds have brought them to this place. Show them no pity.

"We go to liberate, not to conquer. We will not fly our flags in their country. We are entering Iraq to free a people, and the only flag that will be flown in that ancient land is their own. Show respect for them.

"There are some who are alive at this moment who will not be alive shortly. Those who do not wish to go on that journey, we will not send. As for the others, I expect you to rock their world. Wipe them out if that is what they choose.


Lt. Col. Tim Collins

Reuters / Landov

"But if you are ferocious in battle, remember to be magnanimous in victory. It is a big step to take another human life. It is not to be done lightly. I know of men who have taken life needlessly in other conflicts. They live with the mark of Cain upon them.

"If someone surrenders to you, then remember they have that right in international law, and ensure that one day they go home to their family. The ones who wish to fight? Well, we aim to please.

"If you harm the regiment or its history by over-enthusiasm in killing or in cowardice, know it is your family who will suffer. You will be shunned unless your conduct is of the highest—for your deeds will follow you down through history. We will bring shame on neither our uniform nor our nation. [Collins warns his troops that Saddam may attack them with chemical weapons.]

"It is not a question of if; it's a question of when. We know that he has already devolved the decision to commanders, and that means he has already taken the decision himself. If we survive the first strike we will survive the attack.

"Iraq is steeped in history. It is the site of the Garden of Eden, of the Great Flood and the birthplace of Abraham. Tread lightly there. You will see things that no man could pay to see, and you will have to go a long way to find a more decent, generous and upright people than the Iraqis. You will be embarrassed by their hospitality, even though they have nothing.

"Don't treat them as refugees, for they are in their own country. Their children in years to come will know that the light of liberation in their lives was brought by you.

"If there are casualties of war, then remember that when they woke up and got dressed in the morning they did not plan to die this day. Allow them dignity in death. Bury them properly and mark their graves.

"As for ourselves, let's bring everyone home and leave Iraq a better place for us having been there. Our business is now in the north." ♦

"Be the hunter, not the hunted"

Meanwhile, Major General J.N. Mattis of the United States Marine Corps delivered this equally impressive eve-of-battle message to the 1st Marine Division, then in Kuwait:

"For decades, Saddam Hussein has tortured, imprisoned, raped, and murdered the Iraqi people; invaded neighboring countries without provocation; and threatened the world with weapons of mass destruction. The time has come to end his reign of terror. On your young shoulders rest the hopes of mankind.

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"When I give you the word, together we will cross the Line of Departure, close with those forces that choose to fight, and destroy them. Our fight is not with the Iraqi people, nor is it with members of the Iraqi army who choose to surrender. While we will move swiftly and aggressively against those who resist, we will treat all others with decency, demonstrating chivalry and soldierly compassion for people who have endured a lifetime under Saddam's oppression.

"Chemical attack, treachery, and use of the innocent as human shields can be expected, as can other unethical tactics. Take it all in stride. Be the hunter, not the hunted: Never allow your unit to be caught with its guard down. Use good judgment and act in the best interests of our nation.

"You are part of the world's most feared and trusted force. Engage your brain before you engage your weapon. Share your courage with each other as we enter the uncertain terrain north of the Line of Departure. Keep faith in your comrades on your left and right and Marine Air overhead. Fight with a happy heart and strong spirit.

"For the mission's sake, our country's sake, and the sake of the men who carried the Division's colors in past battles—*who fought for life* and *never lost their nerve*—carry out your mission and *keep your honor clean.* Demonstrate to the world there is 'No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy' than a U.S. Marine." ♦

Flipper Goes to War

Trained to detect and mark mines, a pod of Atlantic bottle-nosed dolphins have been helping to speed humanitarian shipments to southern Iraq, winning the hearts of readers looking for something a little lighter in wartime news reports. But not everyone likes to see the cute pictures of Ensign Flipper.

Stephanie Boyles, a wildlife biologist with PETA, says it is "just ridiculous" to spend time "trying to train animals that have lives and minds of their own to try and carry out these tasks for us." Boyles complained to CNSNews last week that the dolphins "have not volunteered" for the mission.

The dolphins, or "marine mammal systems," swim alongside Navy boats, using their sonar to locate mines that might cause problems for ships carrying relief supplies into the port of Umm Qasr. Navy Captain Mike Tillotson told reporters in Iraq that the dolphins are trained to place a marker near any detected mines. Then they surface for fish. Each dolphin gets about 20 pounds of fish a day.

Tillotson's description of the dolphins' activities does not reassure PETA, however. Boyles says that it is her "great fear" that trainers at the Space and Naval War Systems Center in San Diego are using "negative reinforcement in order to train these animals." No word yet on whether the dolphins have also been trained to balance balls on their noses, a practice PETA also objects to. ♦

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Casual

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 1927-2003

The world has no need for another contribution to the fitting stream of tributes to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's extraordinary life and work. But I hope a brief personal reminiscence will not be amiss.

Everyone knows about Pat Moynihan's political and intellectual accomplishments. What is perhaps less well known is Pat's humanity. The last time I spoke with him was in early November 2002. My father had recently had a major operation, and was home from the hospital. Pat had been in touch throughout with my mother, and had spoken with my father since the operation—but he didn't want to bother them at their apartment by calling when they might be resting or busy. So he called me at home on a Saturday afternoon to ask how my father was doing, and to pass on his and Liz's best wishes and love.

The call was characteristic of Pat in a couple of ways. It was kind and thoughtful in its intention with respect to my parents. It was also unusual in its execution. Pat called, and our 15-year-old son answered the phone. Rather than simply ask for Susan or me, Pat engaged Joe in a discussion of his school and other activities.

Joe was a bit awed to be speaking to the famous Mr. Moynihan; he also had some difficulty understanding Pat, whose speech patterns were, one recalls, a bit unusual. And the phone connection, for some reason, wasn't very good. So by the end of their exchange, Joe was a little rattled, though proud to have had a real conversation with a world-historical figure—a kindness Pat knew he was performing, but performed naturally. (Susan reminded me, as we reminisced about this incident after hearing of Pat's death, that Joe was the child who was in utero when Pat exclaimed to her, "I love pregnant women. They look as if, if you dropped them from a tall building, they would bounce.")

That day, after I got on the phone and reassured Pat about my father, we had a longish conversation about The Weekly Standard. Pat had particularly enjoyed one piece in the most recent issue, he said. What was that? I asked, assuming he would praise David Brooks on "Saddam's Brain" or Max Boot on deterrence, or perhaps even Gary Anderson on Norman Podhoretz's book on the Prophets. No. Pat wanted to praise, at some length, Joe Epstein's review of the new biography of Max Beerbohm.

Owen Franken/Corbis

It turned out Pat Moynihan was a great fan of Max Beerbohm. As a young man studying in London in the early 1950s, it seems, Pat had made a pilgrimage to visit the elderly Beerbohm. But, if I recall the story accurately, after taking trains and buses to arrive at Beerbohm's house, Pat had approached the gate, felt suddenly intimidated at the thought of meeting the great man, and returned to London.

Having myself been intimidated (through no fault of his) by Pat Moynihan for the almost forty years I'd known him, I was amused at the idea of Pat's being intimidated by anyone. But I was reminded, as he dilated brilliantly on Beerbohm's works and his meaning to the young readers and writers of Pat's generation, how unusual—how unique—was the range of Moynihan's interests, knowledge, and enthusiasm.

The Weekly Standard had the honor to publish Pat Moynihan once. He reviewed—generously and enthusiastically—Norman Podhoretz's memoir, *Ex-Friends*, in February 1999. He offered only what he called "one quiet reservation" about Norman's "thrilling" book. Surely, Pat wrote, "Lionel Trilling and his wife Diana were never truly ex-friends. Indeed in the closing paragraph of the chapter on Trilling, [Podhoretz] records, 'I think about him a lot, always with admiration, gratitude, and indeed love.' That is as it should be." It was characteristic of Pat that even in a book review, he would want to soften a rupture, to heal a break.

I first met Pat when, as a 12-year-old, I did a bit of volunteer work in his campaign for New York City Council president in 1965. I then worked for him in the summer of 1970 in the Nixon White House, and in his 1976 Senate primary race against Bella Abzug. While we subsequently drifted apart politically, I always remained proud to claim some relationship of debt and obligation to him. He was a kind benefactor and a gentle instructor, who put friendship ahead of partisanship, generosity ahead of ideology. I will think about him a lot, always with admiration, gratitude, and indeed love.

William Kristol

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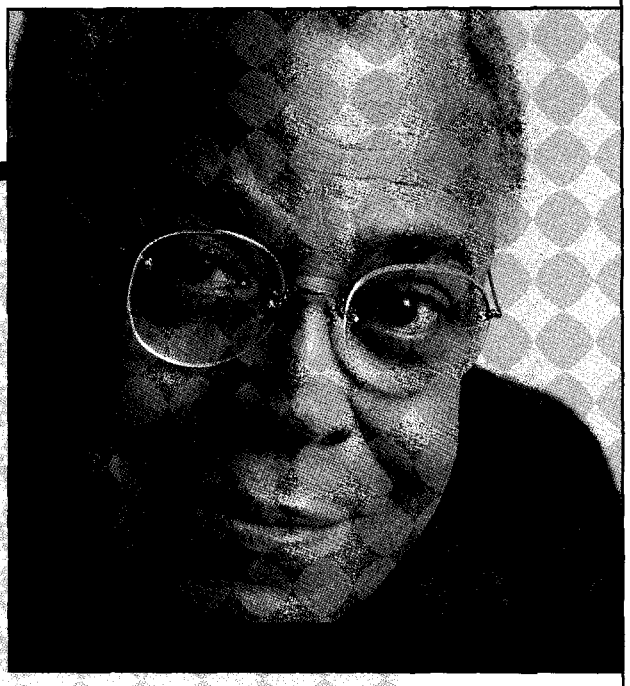

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Shia Madness

I COMMEND STEPHEN SCHWARTZ for his truly insightful article on the Shia Muslims of today ("Fear Not the Shias," March 24). Increasingly, it is becoming critical to recognize and understand the differences between this traditionally oppressed minority and the remainder of the Islamic world. The latter has oppressed, terrorized, and killed the Shia for the past 1,400 years wherever they were.

Therefore, it is no surprise that some of the greatest despots and world terrorists today happen not to be Shia Muslim (take Saddam, bin Laden, Qaddafi, and the entire Saudi clan for starters).

As a Shia Muslim, I also recognize that Shias have made some mistakes in the recent past, which have contributed to their image problem in the West. However, at heart, Shias are a peace-loving people who have a profound sense of human justice and dignity. Americans would do well to find out more about this long-misunderstood minority. When they do, they will find a warm and sincere people willing to reach out to meet and greet their liberators, and strive towards a Middle East based on justice, democracy, pluralism, and human rights.

JAFFER SYED
Toronto, Canada

AS A SECULAR, AMERICAN LAWYER who is also Shia, I was very pleased to read Stephen Schwartz's article. We Shias have always maintained that Wahhabism is a threat to all peoples. We recognized the Taliban as an enemy of the world long before 9/11. How can the murderers of the Prophet's family be Muslims, never mind leaders of Islam? I have been taught love of all peoples: Jews, Christians, etc.

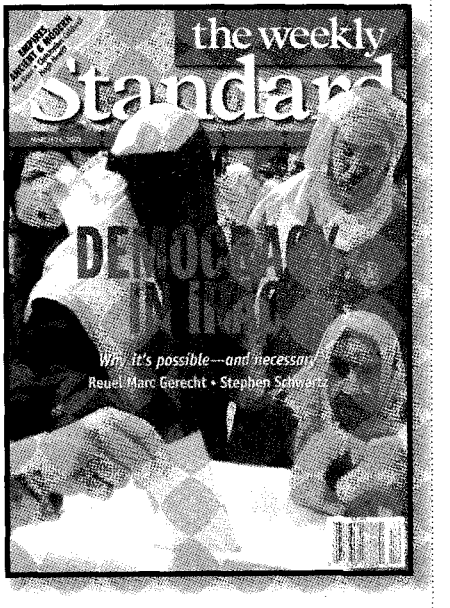
I will be thankful the day Saddam Hussein dies. I only hope that we do not lose this opportunity to once and for all destroy the terrorist, fundamentalist Wahhabi movement.

REAZ H. JAFRI
Manhasset, NY

Democracy Doubts

ALTHOUGH REUEL MARC GERECHT makes reasonably strong arguments for establishing a democracy in "Why We Need a Democratic Iraq" (March 24), there are many compelling reasons why it will not, should not, or cannot be realized. The president refers to "representative government" rather than democracy—interpreted as "majority" rule, which tends to rotate its rules and is therefore unstable. Who wants to extend the instability in Iraq for a moment longer?

In his writings, economist James M. Buchanan grapples with the injustice and inefficiency arising from unfettered majority rule in parliamentary assemblies. Buchanan determined that majority rule can be safely allowed to operate in ordinary politics, but requires a constitutional framework for stability. In Iraq, there is no history of constitutional rule, and stability will therefore be harder to attain.



DOUGLAS A. ROBERTSON
The Woodlands, TX

After Iraq Falls

JEFFREY BELL'S "Bush's Grand Strategy" (March 24) takes a look at the big picture, but one point about the fallout from the war in Iraq is worth expanding. American troops in Iraq will cut off the overland route of weapons from Iran to Syria. This will short-circuit Hamas. Fewer weapons mean fewer attacks on Israel. Fewer attacks mean peace between Israel and the Arabs becomes more likely.

An Iraq that is friendly to the United States also allows us to keep a close eye on the nascent Iranian nuclear program. If it becomes necessary to use force against Iran, they will be between American allies Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. There will not be another kabuki dance like in Turkey to position American troops for an attack.

JERRY D. STAATZ
Grand Prairie, TX

Federalism Lives

FEW TRUE CONSERVATIVES doubt the wisdom of reining in skyrocketing medical malpractice costs. Fewer still believe that even legitimately victimized plaintiffs should, in essence, win the lottery as a result of their doctor's negligence. To this end, William Tucker cites California's 1976 law approvingly, which caps non-economic damages at $250,000, in "Legal Malpractice" (March 24). But this immediately raises a question that I believe most WEEKLY STANDARD readers should also ponder: Why should tort reform be a federal issue? Tort law is almost uniquely a creature of the common law, which is to say, state law. So is insurance. So is physician regulation.

While it's always easier to attack a problem once, instead of 50 times, conservatives should remain wary of Congress usurping what are, in essence, powers reserved to the states.

STEVE DRIES
Green Bay, WI

Royal Pain

I HOPE NO ONE has a more depressing commentary on the deplorable lack of interest in the great historian Christopher Dawson than this: During four years in the graduate history program at Notre Dame (1978-82), I did not hear his name mentioned a single time.

May God grant that Robert Royal's article "Dawson's History" (March 17) be the first step in putting an end to this shameful neglect.

C.H. ROSS
Nashville, TN

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TRANSMISSION–WHO'LL SHAPE THE SYSTEM?

MEET THE REGULATOR

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), in a misconceived quest to nationalize America's electric transmission system, is about to make a power grab of unprecedented ambition.

FERC's Standard Market Design (SMD) rule seeks to usurp traditional state responsibilities and confer on itself vast and unfettered authority.

America's governors oppose the FERC power grab. State regulators oppose it. Consumer groups and labor oppose it. We, as committed conservatives, oppose it.

It's time for Congress to constrain this agency's attempt to move power from the states and into its growing federal bureaucracy.

CONSERVATIVES FOR BALANCED ELECTRICITY REFORM

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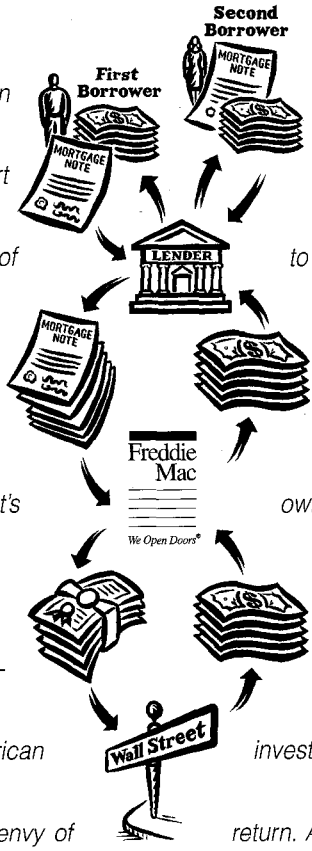
Freddie Mac on the secondary mortgage market.

The unsung hero of American public policy.



It may not be as well-known as Social Security, Head Start or the National Institutes of Health, but the secondary mortgage market is every bit as successful. Since 1970, it's helped 33 million hardworking families become homeowners and made the American home financing system the envy of the world. The secondary mortgage market is where lenders get the funds they use for home mortgages. They sell the mortgages to companies like Freddie Mac, and we, in turn, package them into securities and sell them to investors. The best part is, everybody wins. The borrower gets a home of his own with affordable monthly payments, the lender gets more customers and the investor gets a reliable, consistent return. All at no cost to the taxpayer. It's a system that works for everyone. You can't get more American than that. To learn more about our role, visit freddiemac.com/secmarket.

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the weekly Standard

The War for Liberalism

We've learned at least two things in the first nine days of the Second Gulf War. The American people are fine. American liberalism is not.

Here's the good news about the American people: They're not affected by the silly mood swings of much of the media. Americans outside newsrooms and TV studios understand that wars are often difficult and usually unpredictable. They know that totalitarian regimes do not fall easily. They grasp the fact that lots of military decisions are judgment calls, and that there's not much point paying attention to instant second-guessing. And they believe that the events of the war so far—the Baathist war crimes, the care in the use of force by the American military—confirm the depravity of Saddam's regime, and the justice of America's cause.

Our pro-war friends who are concerned about the mainstream media's idiocy can relax. It's not really doing any damage—except to the media. Every poll shows the American people are resolute, convinced the war is necessary and just, and determined to see it through to the end. As long as the Bush administration continues to focus all its attention on winning the war, it will have the support of the American people.

What of American liberalism? It is in the process of undergoing one of its once-in-a-generation splits. In 1948, the American left divided between Harry Truman's anti-Communists and Henry Wallace's fellow travelers. Luckily, the split turned out to be overwhelmingly one-sided, and American liberalism more or less ejected the Henry Wallace faction from its ranks.

Twenty-four years later, a Wallace supporter, George McGovern, captured the Democratic nomination for president. Now, the hawkish Scoop Jackson faction found itself on the losing side. Cold War liberals became an ever smaller minority through the 1970s, eventually departing the Democratic party and the ranks of modern liberalism.

Today, three decades later, after a Clintonian interregnum which papered over ideological differences, American liberalism is in the process of dividing again, into the Dick Gephardt liberals and the Dominique de Villepin left.

The Gephardt liberals are patriots. They supported the president in the run-up to this war, and strongly support the war now that it has begun. It would be misleading to call this group the Joe Lieberman liberals, because he was already too much of a hawk to be representative, but the group certainly includes Lieberman. It also includes Hillary Rodham Clinton, probably a majority of Senate Democrats, less than half of the House Democrats, Democratic foreign policy experts at places like the Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations, and a smaller number of liberal commentators and opinion leaders—most notably the *Washington Post* editorial page.

The other group includes the Teddy Kennedy wing of the Senate Democrats, the Nancy Pelosi faction of the House Democrats, a large majority of Democratic grassroots activists, the bulk of liberal columnists, the *New York Times* editorial page, and Hollywood. These liberals—better, leftists—hate George W. Bush so much they can barely bring themselves to hope America wins the war to which, in their view, the president has illegitimately committed the nation. They hate Don Rumsfeld so much they can't bear to see his military strategy vindicated. They hate John Ashcroft so much they relish the thought of his Justice Department flubbing the war on terrorism. They hate conservatives with a passion that seems to burn brighter than their love of America, and so, like M. de Villepin, they can barely bring themselves to call for an American victory.

It would be bad for America if this wing of American liberalism were to prevail. Parts of the Republican party, and of the conservative movement, fell into a similar trap in the late 1990s, hating Bill Clinton more than Slobodan Milosevic. But this wing of the GOP and conservatism lost in an intra-party and intra-movement struggle, and has now been marginalized—Pat Buchanan is no longer a Republican, and his magazine these days makes common cause with Norman Mailer and Gore Vidal. The fight over the future of liberalism is not one conservatives can really join. But we can wholeheartedly cheer from the sidelines for the Gephardt liberals against their anti-American leftist rivals, hoping that they succeed in saving the (mostly) good name of liberalism.

—*William Kristol*

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Iraqi Exiles Go to War . . .

Led by an impressive Special Forces colonel.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Near the Iraqi border

A GROUP of bleary-eyed soldiers has gathered at 3:45 Thursday morning in the truck bay of the firehouse they call home. They've come together for the most serious of purposes—to send soldiers to battle. Most of the American soldiers gathered here sport a "high-and-tight," military jargon for a crew cut. The exception is Lieutenant Colonel Dan Hammack, a Special Forces officer commanding this ad hoc unit of Free Iraqi Forces and the Americans who've spent the last two months training them. His normally well-coiffed hair is tousled, shooting out in several different directions.

The bedhead doesn't seem to distract those standing at attention before him—three members of the Free Iraqi Forces, Iraqi Americans who've volunteered to help coalition forces liberate their people, and "Doc" Snyder, the U.S. Army reservist and university professor tasked with taking the three to hostile territory. Hammack's speech, all nine words, is directed primarily at the Iraqis: "Listen to Doc. Be safe. See you in Baghdad."

He snaps his hand to his forehead, and the four men return the salute. One of the Iraqis is late, raising his hand as the others lower theirs. No matter—there are handshakes and hugs all around.

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Hammack is a man of few words, in a relatively formal setting like this one. When he was first introduced to the Iraqis he now calls his men in mid-January, I'm told, the normally boisterous group fell silent. Their classroom, at an air base in rural Hungary, was a shuttered section of a warehouse bigger than a football field. The temperature outside was 9 degrees Fahrenheit, and large heating vents noisily pumped in air to keep the troops warm. The military trainers strained to be heard over the din. But when Hammack entered the room the noise disappeared. "You could hear his feet hitting the floorboards," says Sergeant First Class Curtis Mancini, another trainer.

Stephen F. Hayes

Lt. Col. Hammack addresses his troops.

"They didn't know what to make of the colonel," Mancini continues. "He gets up there and there's silence. He takes out his wallet, and a picture of his family because he knows how important family is to the Arabs. And he tells them that he expects to go back to his family when he's done. He tells them he expects them to go back to their families, too."

He ended by telling them he was proud to serve with them, and by asking the group if they were ready for battle. They responded in unison, "Hoo-ah!"

The entire speech lasted four minutes. Its impact, though, endures. Hammack and his cadre of supporting officers helped transform this group of Iraqi-American volunteers, many of whom came with no military experience, into a significant asset in the current war. To be sure, the Iraqis brought a detailed knowledge of their native land, specific information about the enemy, and an unparalleled desire to rid the world of Saddam Hussein. But creating unit cohesion, establishing common goals, and instilling firm discipline is done only through strong leadership.

"There's a phrase in the military, SWAG—it stands for silly, wild-ass guess, and it's the way some people work," says Capt. Michael Maguire. "Hammack says, 'F— it, this is my mission, and I'm going to accomplish it.' He walks into a room and people can feel the confidence level rise, and people will help you do anything if you have their confidence."

Hammack is short and well built, with sharp, well-drawn features. His uniform is decorated with what his troops call "scare badges"—Army Ranger, Airborne, Special Forces, Pathfinder, Halo Wings, Combat Infantryman's Badge. Married with three children, Hammack is now in the Army reserves. He owns a heavy construction company in Edison, Georgia. It is currently being run by his father and the company's second in command. Hammack's southern drawl is prominent. Hungary is Hung-gary, Saddam is Sad-damn. He speaks in crisp, short sentences.

I ask him about leadership, then about training the Free Iraqi Forces. "A commander has to be solid in his

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resolve, decisive in his thinking. Steady. I'm not pretentious. There's nothing fake about me. I'm never acting."

He continues. "Some men look for causes, some causes find the men. This cause has found the men. We all come here by fate, even you. There's a lot of stress in a combat environment. Men need a leader, but they need someone who cares about them. Not only a leader, but also a friend. That's the basis of trust."

There are limits to the friendship. Each night here in the desert, Ltc. Hammack and Sfc. Mancini carve out a small circle in the sand. They stand inside, smoke cigars, plan their mission, and consider life's big questions. No one is allowed inside the circle unless invited, and, naturally, what is said in the circle stays in the circle.

On Wednesday, I was invited into the circle for the first time (and maybe not the last, since I recently returned to our camp with a box of 25 "Romeo y Julietas" from Havana). As we talked, several soldiers formed a ring around us, standing just outside "the circle." When one of them inched his toes across the line in the sand, he was greeted with a swift reprimand. "Get the f— out," Hammack barked. It was a good-natured scolding, delivered with a laugh, but no one questioned his seriousness. When a second soldier toed the line, Hammack shot back with a warning glare. The line was not breached again.

Hammack's group, known around here as Task Force Hammack, has placed most of the Free Iraqi Forces with units now well inside Iraq, including the 1st Marine Expeditionary Forces and the 101st Airborne. They are near the front lines. Hammack is characteristically blunt when I ask him about the risks to those newly minted soldiers.

"Some of them will die. I think to myself, Did I do everything I could to train them well? It keeps me up at night. But you can't dwell on it. March forward."

So Hammack sends them deeper into Iraq with a few words, a salute, and a handshake. One man on hand Thursday morning to bid his colleagues farewell is Hakim, a leader of the Free Iraqi Forces. He waits patiently to head further north, confident in the training he has received and grateful for Hammack.

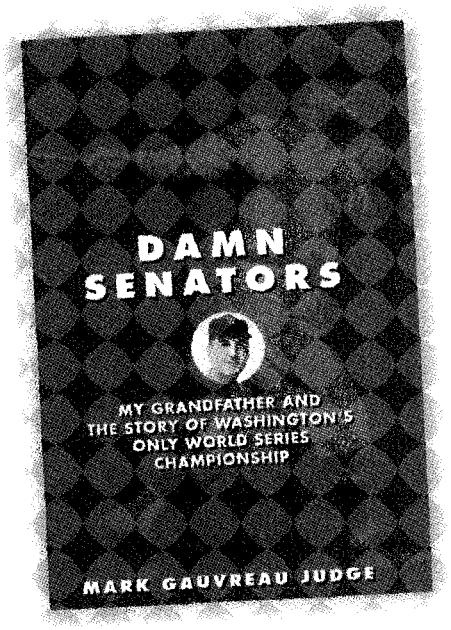
"When we say goodbye to those guys, I watch his eyes, not listen to his words," he says of Hammack. "I can see that he has the courage, but he also cares, like a father. I see his face and I almost . . . I get emotional and I have to drop my head."

As the group breaks up, Hammack turns to Mike, a beefy Iraqi from Windsor, Canada, who is one of the three going forward in this group.

"You're going to what we like to call Indian country," Hammack says. "Be ready."

"We are ready, sir." ♦

THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON



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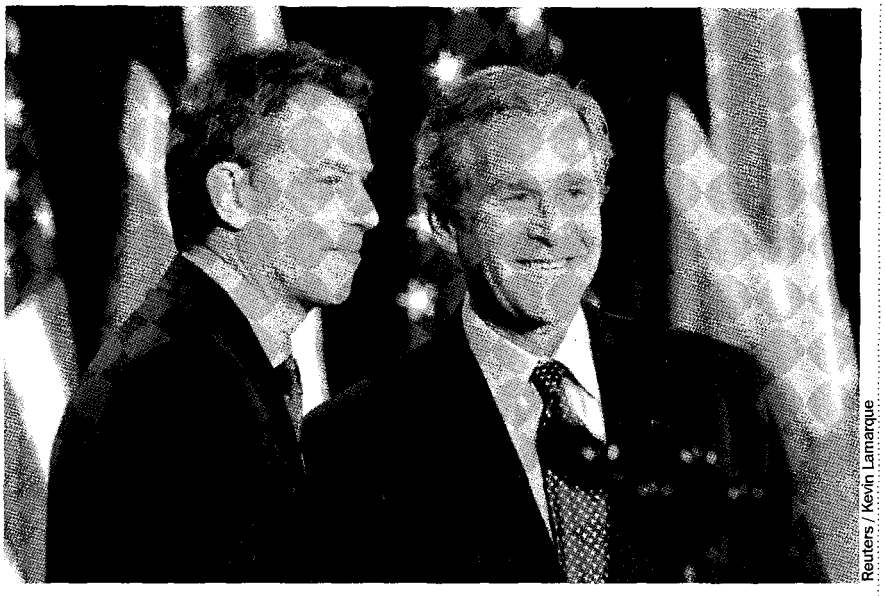
The Dynamic Duo

Is there trouble ahead for this beautiful friendship? BY FRED BARNES



Reuters / Kevin Lamarque

IN THE DAYS before the British Parliament voted on a resolution endorsing war with Iraq, Prime Minister Tony Blair was a nervous wreck. He feared losing so many Labour members that the opposition Conservatives would be in a pivotal position to save or embarrass him. The Bush administration rushed to his rescue. A campaign was mobilized to induce Conservatives to vote with Blair. A barrage of phone calls was made from Washington by administration officials, key Republicans, and anyone else Bush advisers could find who was close to Conservative members of Parliament. Blair won on a 412-to-149 vote and his Conservative backing jumped from 129 to 152.

In the end, the aggressive support of the Bush administration was not crucial. Blair would have won without it. But the episode reveals the lengths to which Bush has gone to aid Blair, his brave and loyal ally against Iraq. In discussions at the White House, Bush is tireless in reminding his inner circle: "We have to do everything we can to help Tony Blair. We don't want his government to fall." Now Blair is asking for more help in two areas where Bush has strong reservations about making concessions—Israel and the Palestinians, and the role for the United Nations in postwar Iraq. A rupture between Bush and Blair isn't likely, but agreement won't be easy.

Bush and Blair formed a tight relationship early in the Bush presidency. This was surprising because Blair had been so close to President Clinton—personally, politically, and ideologically. Blair admired Clinton's intelligence and told associates Clinton had an amazing gift for instantly understanding any issue, even ones he hadn't dealt with. But Blair also found big talk by Clinton was often not followed by action. Bush was less scintillating but more reliable. With Bush, Blair was assured the special relationship between America and Great Britain was on firm and predictable ground.

One act by Blair solidified the friendship in the eyes of Bush and his top aides. On September 20, 2001, the day of Bush's speech to Congress and the nation after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Blair flew to Washington for dinner with Bush. During the speech, Blair sat in the House of Representatives balcony next to Laura Bush, then flew back to London after only a few hours in Washington. Bush was impressed and grateful. After the Taliban was crushed in Afghanistan, Blair was on board from the beginning on the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, administration officials say. Since the war began, Bush and Blair have talked daily. Last week they conferred for two days at Camp David.

Without Blair, the president would be in a dicey situation and far less able to recruit allies against Iraq. Blair's presence meant the war would never be unilateral. Blair, however, lacks the widespread support at home for ousting Saddam that Bush has in the United States. The left wing of Blair's Labour party is fervently antiwar, as are the Liberal Democrats. A slim majority of British public opinion didn't line up behind the war until the invasion started.

Bush feels indebted to Blair and he's shown it. The president began a press conference with Blair at Camp David with a remarkable tribute. "America has learned a lot about Tony Blair over the last weeks," Bush said. "We've learned that he's a man of his word. We've learned he's a man of courage, that he's a man of vision, and we're proud to have him as a friend." More important, Bush has acceded time after time to serious steps or gestures that Blair believed would aid him politically in Great Britain.

Blair credits himself with persuading the president to take the case against Saddam to the U.N. last fall. Secretary of State Powell gave Bush the same advice. In truth, both were pushing on an open door. At the

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Anti-Gun Lobby Using 9-11 and War on Terrorism to Take Away Your Rights.

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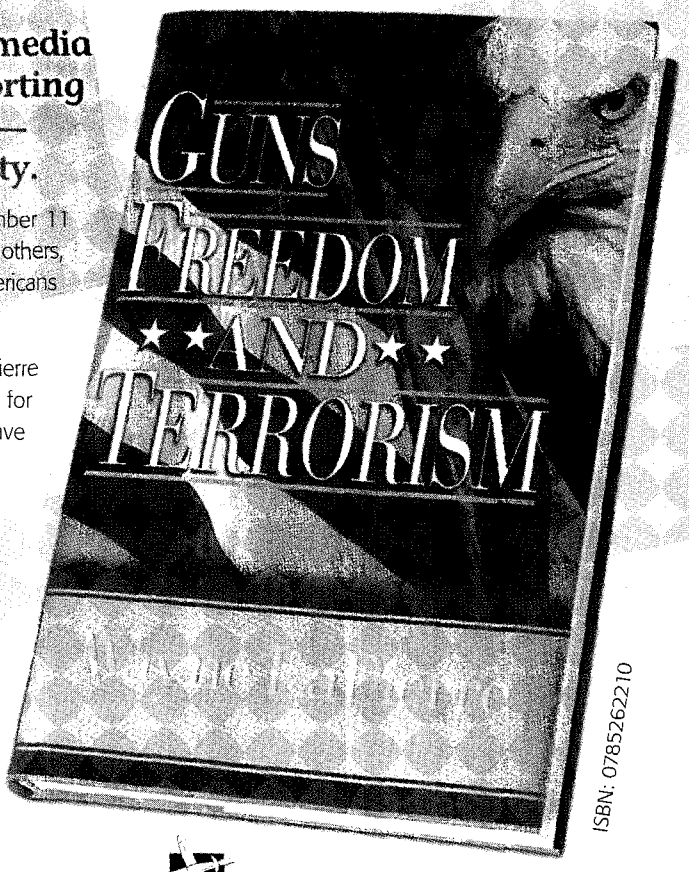

ISBN: 0785262210

The gun-control lobby has been working overtime to link the tragedies of September 11 to guns. Senators Joe Lieberman, Chuck Schumer, John McCain, Hillary Clinton, and others, say limiting our Second Amendment rights will save us from terrorist attacks. But Americans know better – which is why first-time gun ownership is at an all-time high.

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U.N., Blair urged Bush to seek a resolution, which Bush did. Then he got Bush to accept a narrow resolution that didn't incorporate early U.N. resolutions on human rights and other non-disarmament matters.

Blair, again partly for political relief at home, insisted on new arms inspections in Iraq—but not inspections that could be enforced "by any means necessary," the language favored by the president. Blair also asked Bush to go along with a second U.N. Security Council meeting earlier this year, which Bush thought was unnecessary but nonetheless agreed to. And the prime minister argued he needed a second U.N. resolution on Iraq to assuage his critics. This proved an embarrassment. The resolution failed despite intense lobbying by Bush and Blair.

That's quite a list of concessions by Bush, and there's more. On March 14, Bush in Washington and Blair in London announced the imminent release of the so-called road map for a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. It was drafted by the "quartet"—the United States, the U.N., the European Union, and Russia—and is to be made public once the new Palestinian prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, is sworn in. For Blair, the announcement was intended to placate Labour left-wingers obsessed with the Palestinian cause and to establish Blair as a significant player in the Middle East. Bush has deep qualms about the road map. Among other things, it treats Palestinian terrorism and Israeli retaliation as morally equivalent. Blair used the occasion of the announcement to advocate "evenhandedness," a code word for pressuring Israel.

The final concession—for now, anyway—came at the Azores summit three days before the war began. The summit itself was as much Bush's idea as Blair's. But the notion of going back to the U.N. to recruit it to oversee postwar Iraq was Blair's. Bush agreed with enlisting the U.N., but not for the commanding role envisioned by Blair. The two discussed the issue at Camp David without reaching agreement. Afterwards Blair said the U.N. "has got to be closely involved in this process." But deliberations on this are "best done" privately.

Accommodating Blair may be impossible. For one thing, Blair has a higher opinion of the U.N. than Bush does. And he has more amicable relations with U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan. In London last week, Blair said the U.N. should be "centrally involved" in administering postwar Iraq. He said this would be "in the interests of the international community and the coalition forces." Of course it would also be in Blair's political interest. The Labour cabinet member for international development, Claire Short, threatened to resign over the war but didn't, raising suspicions Blair had bought her off by promising to push for a major U.N. role.

Accommodating Blair may be impossible. For one thing, Blair has a higher opinion of the U.N. than Bush does. And he has more amicable relations with Kofi Annan.

Bush is wary of the U.N. for good reasons. It doesn't make sense for an organization opposed to the war in Iraq to control the people and the country that the war liberated. Besides, an administration official says, the U.N. generally failed in its efforts to administer Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, and Cambodia. "The Iraqis don't need someone running the country for them," the official added. The U.S. initially wants the military to administer postwar Iraq along with a council of Iraqis. The U.N. would serve as an umbrella group through which countries could funnel humanitarian assistance. If Bush has his way, the U.N. would immediately turn over the Oil-for-Food program and the $12 billion it holds in escrow to Iraq's new governing body.

The president and Blair are even further apart on the Middle East. Their most visible difference is over Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Bush has called him a roadblock to peace and urged his ouster. Blair treats Arafat as a legitimate leader, phoning him when release of the road map was announced and once more since then. "I know Arafat," says former U.S. Middle East negotiator Dennis Ross. "He will see this and use it and say, 'I'm the address for the world' to reach the Palestinians." Last January, Blair set up a London conference on Palestinian reform and asked Arafat to send a delegation. Arafat tried, but Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon barred the Palestinians from leaving.

On the road map itself, Bush and Blair are at odds. Blair wants the document to be released and implemented. Bush sees it as a pretext for reviving talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The document, according to Bush, should be open to revision with fresh ideas from both sides. Administration officials are also skeptical about the quartet's willingness to hold the Palestinians accountable—for stopping suicide attacks on Israel, for instance. After all, the U.N., E.U., and the Russians have been unwilling to impose accountability on Saddam.

As chummy as Bush and Blair are, prospects for agreement on the U.N. and Middle East are poor. Bush feels beholden to Blair, but gratitude has its limits. Until now, Blair has faithfully followed the advice of Winston Churchill that the British government should never get separated from the Americans. But his closeness to Bush has led to sneering accusations that he's become Bush's "poodle." For Blair, once the war in Iraq is won, a little separation from the Americans may be what politics at home requires. Regardless, the special relationship will survive. ♦

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Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)", in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories". In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millenium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem", let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem".

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem".

"Settlements". When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements", with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

The term "settlements", too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees". In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps", so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians", the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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Oil for Food, Money for Kofi

A U.N. program that has outlived its usefulness.

BY CLAUDIA ROSETT

IT'S HUGE, OPAQUE, PERVERSE, run by the United Nations, and about the last thing a postwar Iraq will need. But after a short pause, the oil for food program is with us once again, revived last week at the urging of France, and with the backing of President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair.

United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan had suspended the program at the start of the war—leaving all concerned to contemplate $2.8 billion in oil for food funds left in limbo, plus $10.1 billion worth of goods contracted for but stuck in the pipeline. With Saddam deemed no longer viable as a contracting party, the U.N. has just given a somewhat modified oil for food plan a 45-day lease on life, subject to renewal.

Perhaps it was simplest to press on for a few more weeks with this monstrosity of a program, which in recent years has turned the U.N. into chief comprador for Baghdad, overseeing oil deals on commission for Saddam Hussein. An estimated 60 percent of Iraqis depend on oil for food rations, and going ahead for a brief spell with a U.N. program now revamped to bypass Saddam might help in rushing relief, already paid for, to hungry Iraqis. It might also have the dubious virtue of helping Tony Blair demonstrate to his more muddled constituents that, yes, he can do business with the U.N. And, at a moment when Bush and Blair are urgently busy fighting a war to free Iraq, temporarily extending oil for food may have averted the distraction of more hysteria from the Russians and French, whose contractors have been among the top suppliers of Saddam, and whose done deals via the U.N. were in mortal danger of going sour.

For all that, simply scrapping oil for food would have been the wiser move. This program was crafted by the U.N. in 1995 as a "temporary measure" tied to Saddam, not meant to outlive him. The plan was to continue sanctions against Saddam's regime, while trying to funnel basic necessities—via Saddam's Trade Ministry—to the Iraqi people. That mission has by now turned into one of the most Byzantine, distorted, and massive "relief" efforts ever devised. Oil for food is not a program designed merely to deliver food and medicine, neither is it arranged so as to promote the development of a healthy society. It is, in practice, a scaffold for dictatorship, erected and maintained by U.N. bureaucracy. The only revamping thorough enough to fix these drawbacks will require tearing the whole thing down and starting fresh—with the U.N. playing a peripheral role, if any at all.

The unique twist of oil for food, the feature that makes it supreme among the world's lousiest aid schemes, is that it depends for all its funding, including its administrative budget, on the revenues of Iraq's state oil monopoly. So the U.N. is bankrolled by the very government it is supposed to be monitoring. And, having supplied all the money, the government of Iraq gets to draw up a shopping list, and propose, subject to an okay from the U.N., who among its citizens will get what. Never mind that Iraq's problem has been the lack of liberty, stifling of private enterprise, and gross misappropriation of resources by Saddam. The U.N. has for years been content to serve in Iraq chiefly as conduit and trustee for Saddam's selling, buying, and distributing.

The sums of money involved are enormous, both for Saddam and the U.N. Iraq is home to the world's second-largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, and despite the degradation of its petroleum industry under Saddam, there's been enough production to make oil for food the U.N.'s single largest program in terms of Kofi Annan's say-so over cash flow.

Since the program began operating in December 1996, the U.N. has shepherded about $64 billion in Iraqi oil sales, and more than $39 billion in relief purchases, plus billions more for projects such as compensation to foreign victims of the first Gulf War. To cover its administrative costs, the U.N. collects a 2.2 percent commission on Iraqi oil sales, a setup that over the course of the program has generated more than $1 billion for U.N. coffers.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the U.N. has greatly expanded the oil for food program, in 1998 raising an initial ceiling on Saddam's oil sales, and in 1999 removing it entirely. With higher revenues (until interrupted by the war), the scope of imports has also expanded, subject to a distribution plan inside Iraq that the U.N. explains is "prepared by the Government of Iraq and approved by the Secretary General."

Along with the usual meals and medicine, oil for food last year introduced such items—approved by Annan this past December—as $4 million for air conditioners, phones, and vehicles to support the workings of Saddam's so-called Ministry of Justice. Annan also signed off on $50 million to supply Baghdad's totalitarian Ministry of Information "with television and radio studio systems, mobile broadcasting vehicles, television, and radio transmission

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equipment"—all for the use of the same Saddam propaganda machine that coalition troops have been risking their lives to knock off the air.

Another intriguing item approved by Annan last December was $20 million earmarked for "a project of Olympic sport city," complete with a sports hotel and $10 million worth of "sports supplies and materials." It bears noting, though the U.N. report does not do so, that the person infamously in charge of Olympic sports in Iraq has been Saddam's son Uday, long known for his sadistic ways. According to a gruesome report in *Sports Illustrated*, Uday has tortured athletes who disappoint him with beatings and amputations.

Inside Iraq, the U.N. has had nine of its alphabet-soup agencies implementing the oil for food program, employing in recent times some 900 expatriates and 3,000 locals. Their job has been to ensure that distribution takes place in keeping with the plan drawn up by Saddam and approved by Annan. In other words, the U.N. has basically been in the business of shoring up a prime source of Saddam's control—his command-economy state dole.

One might argue that with Saddam removed from the helm, oil for food will revert to a more benign aid arrangement. In Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq—where Saddam has been required by U.N. rules to hand over 13 percent of his oil proceeds, but, thanks to U.S. and British overflights, has had no real jurisdiction these past 12 years—local folks have fared much better than in the rest of Iraq. And tapping into Iraq's state monopoly oil income to help rebuild the country is a plan that leaders of the coalition now fighting for a free Iraq have also been considering.

But even for the allies, maintaining a central oil monopoly to fund a vast public dole would be a risky tactic—more likely to perpetuate a command economy, primed for the next dictatorship, than to foster a free society. The only real solution is, somehow, to privatize Iraq's oil riches, cutting the state out of the loop. That will need creative thinking and deep devotion to democratic principles. For anything even approaching such a project, the U.N. oil for food program is spectacularly ill-suited—with its sorry history and large vested interest in whatever it can retrieve of the Saddam setup.

Beyond that, if you like Enron-style transparency, you have to love oil for food. At any given time, the program oversees billions in Iraq's money, awaiting the sludge-slow U.N. process of allocation and disbursement. For the first few years the U.N. parked the cash in a French bank, the Banque Nationale de Paris. More recently, it diversified the funds—currently totaling some $13 billion—among a handful of banks. But the U.N. provides no bank statements to the public, does not disclose the names of the banks, and won't even say what countries they're based in. Auditing is an in-house affair, conducted by government employees of a rotating trio of member states, chaired this year by France.

Is this what American and British troops are now giving their lives to clear the way for? How about some genuine relief? When Annan's Oil-for-U.N.-Jobs program comes up for renewal in May, let's pull the plug. ♦

Casualties Are the First Truth of War

And one the public is well prepared to accept.

BY PETER D. FEAVER

WARFARE IS ABOUT balancing three goals. On the one hand, you must accomplish military objectives, like seizing territory or destroying enemy forces. On the other hand, you must accomplish political objectives, the larger geopolitical goals that the combat is meant to serve, like stability in the region. On the third hand, you must bring back alive as many of your soldiers as possible.

For much of the post-Desert Storm era, the U.S. military has been accused of letting the third goal, force protection, trump the other two. In the Bosnia peacekeeping operation, our NATO allies mocked U.S. forces as ninja turtles, overly laden with body armor and hunkered down on base rather than mixing with the population and keeping the peace. In the Kosovo conflict, questions were raised about General Wesley Clark's zero-casualty, air-only plan, which let Serbian forces run roughshod over Kosovar Albanians and appeared to sacrifice Serbian civilian lives in order to protect the lives of our pilots.

The U.S. military acted this way because they believed (rightly) that political leaders demanded it. Political leaders demanded it because they believed (wrongly) that the U.S. public demanded it.

The United States conducted warfare as if it had a glass jaw—menacing, but easily beaten if its soldiers fell in battle. The precipitous retreat from Somalia was exhibit A.

Lots of people around the world believed casualty phobia was the Achilles' heel of American foreign policy, and some even acted accordingly: Slobodan Milosevic, Osama bin Laden, and now Saddam Hussein.

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Only this time, the U.S. military is not performing according to that script. This time, no one can credibly claim that the war plan puts U.S. force protection ahead of military or political objectives. On the contrary, the plan is remarkably bold and clearly places rapid achievement of the military goals—like blocking the use of weapons of mass destruction or encircling Baghdad—ahead of force protection. U.S. forces are obviously taking great care to minimize Iraqi casualties and thus serve the larger political objective of restoring stability to Iraq, even if it puts U.S. forces at greater risk.

Critics have already surfaced to grouse that the plan is too bold, that Donald Rumsfeld has forced the military into taking too many risks. They worry that the higher casualties will translate into a precipitous decline in public support.

Of course, it is too early to know with certainty whether the battle plan is managing the risks appropriately. There are still military and political objectives to be won. But it is not too soon to put to rest the myth that the public demands force protection ahead of mission accomplishment.

Polls show that the public understandably views casualties as a necessary evil—tragic at the personal level, but tolerable if suffered in the successful pursuit of an important goal. The public does not demand that we cut and run at the first sight of body-bags, but the sight might cause the public to take a peek at political leaders and do a gut check. If political leaders panic, as they did in the Somalia case, then both support for the mission and tolerance for casualties plummet. Why pay such a price for failure? But if political leaders remain calm and convey confidence that the mission will be successful, then the price can be paid.

The Bush administration understands this well and has taken great pains to signal steadfastness of purpose and thus reinforce the military's resolve. Unlike the previous administration, the Bush team has emphasized that victory in Iraq may involve high human costs. It was a theme in the president's first wartime radio address, well before the initial tactical setbacks on Sunday. Every announcement of a casualty is followed up by a reminder that the United States will prevail. Every adverse development, like photos of mistreated American POWs, is used to frame the rationale for the war—Iraq's flouting of international law—rather than frame defeat and confusion on the part of the U.S. military.

The early poll results show that the public is getting this message. In a *Washington Post*-ABC poll taken after bloody Sunday, support for the war remained at 70 percent even though a majority (54 percent) now believed the "United States and its allies will sustain 'significant' casualties in the war." No one in the public was demanding or expecting a cakewalk; roughly 80 percent expected a tough fight for Baghdad. Essentially the same results show up in a CBS-*New York Times* poll taken Monday, after the news had even more time to sink in.

Public support will remain strong, provided that victory is achieved. The sooner the better, of course, but the polls suggest that the public is not unrealistically impatient; nearly half expect the war to last months. That should be plenty of time to discover whether the war plan was daring or foolhardy. In the meantime, the very same presidential resolve that is shoring up public opinion can shore up military confidence.

That is why the military accepted a plan that deviated from its conservative roots and put mission accomplishment squarely ahead of force protection. The Vietnam nightmare is a political leadership that starts a war and then hangs the military out to dry when adverse developments arise. Without confidence in the political leadership, the military's natural reluctance to use force can be impossible to overcome. With a political leader as resolute as President Bush, however, the military need not fear this and can focus on their fronts rather than their backs. ♦

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A Butcher, Indeed

Saddam's war crimes.

BY DAVID SKINNER

ANYONE STILL DOUBTING the criminal essence of Saddam's regime need only survey the methods employed so far by Iraqi fighters to see that laws, humanitarian conventions, and elementary standards of decency hold no sway with the dictator or the men who carry out his will. Already, there are too many reports of actions amounting to war crimes to keep track of, though certain categories of offense stand out.

Perhaps first on the list is the treatment of prisoners of war. The Geneva Conventions, to which Iraq is a signatory, require the "humane treatment" of POWs, who must at all times be "protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity." In this regard, what happened to the Army maintenance unit captured on Sunday, March 23, constituted at least two separate war crimes.

After the 507th Ordnance Maintenance unit made a wrong turn near Nasiriya, several troops were taken into Iraqi custody. Later that day, both Iraqi state television and Al-Jazeera broadcast video of some of these soldiers being interrogated, along with footage of several corpses. Twelve soldiers are missing in connection with these events.

Asked to comment, former POW and Republican senator from Arizona John McCain says, "We are committed to the return of these prisoners. If they are harmed or mistreated, we will go after them. We will pursue them, no matter what it takes, and [the Iraqi forces] will pay the ultimate penalty, if necessary, if they do not observe the Geneva Conventions for the treatment of prisoners of war."

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But it is in regard to civilians that Iraq may be making its darkest contribution to military history. To say that Saddam's forces do not put a premium on human life hardly does justice to the use of men, women, and children as shields, decoys, and crowds to hide among. And it bears noting that even, or rather especially, in wartime, no Iraqi is safe from torture and execution.

Consider some of the stories reported in the first week of the war: a woman in Basra hanged for waving hello to Allied troops, an American officer told reporters; families in Najaf threatened with execution, according to General Vincent Brooks, unless the male family members (children included) joined the fight; Iraqis in Basra firing at their own people, say the British troops fighting there. It would appear that agents of the Iraqi state view human beings as simply disposable.

Along with hiding among and behind civilians, Iraqi fighters are dressing as civilians—and not just the irregulars. Revolutionary Guard soldiers, too, have been found to don man-on-the-street costumes over their uniforms. Feigning civilian or non-combatant status violates the Geneva Conventions, yet instances of this appear to be widespread. Whether Fedayeen, Baath party irregulars, or actual military, Iraqi fighters are disguising themselves not as shrubs (a perfectly legal ruse) but as innocent pedestrians, in Najaf, in Nasiriya, outside Baghdad, in Umm Qasr, and elsewhere.

Indeed, the exploitation of civilians may turn out to be Saddam's principal strategy and the key to his fighters' perseverance. While drawing fire into densely populated areas violates every kind of law, the Iraqis, especially in Basra and Baghdad, appear to be pinning their entire war plan on the coalition's scruples about inflicting civilian casualties. Cities occupied by Iraqi forces remain legitimate targets, although the humanitarian provisions of the Geneva Convention require that potential civilian suffering be taken into account.

The fake surrender is another unlawful trick up the Iraqi sleeve, and instances have been reported almost everywhere there has been fighting. Most heinously, ten Marines were killed in Nasiriya on Sunday, March 23, when a group of Iraqi fighters motioned to surrender, using a white flag, only to open fire in what one general described as the most heated firefight up to that point. "They're saying he was killed in action," said a widow whose husband fell in that clash, "but for me it's really murder."

Then, there are stories that defy classification. The *Washington Post* of March 28 recounted an episode outside Nasiriya. A Marine defending the supply lines saw some Iraqis appearing to surrender. Told to put down their weapons, "they ran back into the building and pushed the kids out the windows and doors. The kids started running because they were scared and then the men ran out shooting."

From such deception, it is a short step to the use of protected buildings and vehicles to shield fighters. The notorious battle in Nasiriya on March 23, during which Marines fought Iraqi troops firing from inside a hospital, not only demonstrated the willingness of Saddam's forces to flout the laws of war (a red crescent made the building a protected site), but also produced evidence suggesting their intention to use weapons of mass destruction: Along with a cache of weapons and a tank, some 3,000 chemical suits were discovered inside.

Plainly, Saddam's military not only tolerates unlawful and murderous tactics, but authorizes and embraces them. The sadistic objectification of human life is the distinguishing mark of Saddam's military doctrine, as it is of his entire regime. ♦

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Baghdad by the Bay

San Francisco's demonstrators—disobedient, but not civil. BY DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

San Francisco

IRAQI DISSIDENTS have been tortured and executed. Some critics of the regime have had their tongues cut out; others have had to watch as government thugs raped their wives and children.

But in San Francisco, protesters know what "repression"—their word—really is. Since March 20, antiwar demonstrators have blocked traffic, sabotaged public transit, and hindered access to office buildings in an effort to put an end to "business as usual" in Baghdad by the Bay's financial district. A group called Pukers for Peace held a vomit-in in front of the Federal Building.

Many law-breaking demonstrators have been cited and released. But authorities did hold some protesters—generally only after they were arrested more than once—and forced them to spend the night in small cells or on blankets in a gymnasium. Detainees later complained that they were fed lousy cheese and peanut butter sandwiches. Worse, some women told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, deputies called them "little girl" and "hon."

In fact, civil rights groups were infuriated that the city went so far as to arrest protesters who broke the law. The antiwar group Direct Action to Stop the War complained about "increased repression from the San Francisco Police Department."

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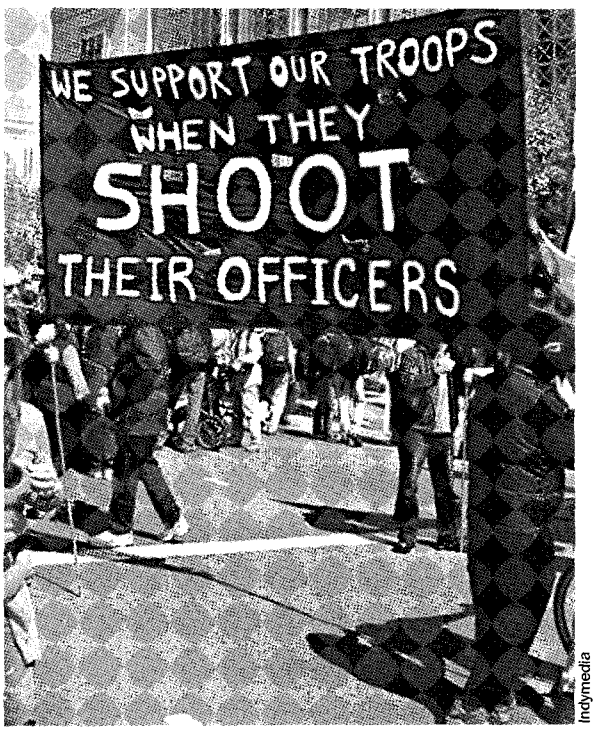
"The mass arrests of protesters who seek only to exercise their democratic rights is part and parcel of the government's campaign to criminalize dissent as it wages war abroad and ravages the working class, blacks and immigrants at home," the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a letter demanding release and amnesty for all protesters to District Attorney Terence Hallinan.



Indymedia

Protesters in San Francisco, March 15

While protesters announced that they were engaging in civil disobedience à la Martin Luther King, activists remain adamant that the 2,300 arrests—including a dozen protesters originally charged with felonies—should not be prosecuted. In other words, they want the moral status of civil disobedience, but please don't ask them to witness to their beliefs by spending time in Birmingham Jail.

And a police report cataloging items recovered after a skirmish at 7th and Stevenson belies the claim that these were acts of civil disobedience. Officers found "one stun gun, two pipe wrenches, four sling shots, bags containing steel ball bearings, . . . gas masks, spray paint canisters, markers, fire extinguishers, bicycle locks, fishing weights, bolt cutters, pipes, hammers, gloves, knives, beer bottles, spark plugs, a railroad spike, two way radios, lighter fluid, heavy metal skillet, 5 large flags attached to 1/2-inch diameter metal poles approximately 6 foot length and other objects."

These demonstrations aren't really about the war on Iraq, either. On Monday, March 24, Critical Mass, the radical bicycle group that stages monthly rides designed to gridlock automobile traffic, started joining the pedestrian protesters for the evening home-commute traffic snarl-up. Flyers announced that Critical Mass rides would make a statement against "war in Iraq, George Bush's right-wing agenda, oil and car dependency [and] the automobile's infringing upon and degrading public space." These demonstrations aren't so much about the war as they are a group rant against President Bush, the private sector, and mainstream America.

It's expensive. Mayor Willie Brown estimates that, between overtime and lost revenue, the demonstrations cost the city as much as $900,000 a day. With San Francisco facing its largest deficit ever, Brown has urged protesters to demonstrate against the war in their own towns—or in Crawford, Texas.

There's been talk of trying to get the protesters to pay for protest-related expenses, but it's not likely. Already District Attorney Terence Hallinan has announced that he has dropped five of the twelve felony charges against protesters, and reduced the

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other seven. Earlier Hallinan told me that he wanted to fine protesters, but doing so could require paying police overtime for court testimony.

Hallinan is no Rudy Giuliani. A *San Francisco Chronicle* analysis found that Hallinan's conviction rate ranked last among the state's 58 counties. He's the rare D.A. with a rap sheet of his own, for numerous infractions in his youth. When Hallinan—also known as Kayo—was a young lawyer, authorities charged him with assaulting a police officer during a demonstration. His trial ended with a hung jury, but Hallinan later sued the city for personal injury and won. Hard to believe, or it should be, but San Francisco voters have elected Hallinan their district attorney *twice*.

Observers expect slight if any punishment from Hallinan for the thousands of people who came from across California, and the country, to protest the war. They deliberately broke the law. They trampled on the rights of workers and commuters. Then when they were slapped on the wrist, they called it "repression." How little they know of the world.

As one officer told me, for most of those arrested, "The most severe penalty they'll be subjected to is the fact that they'll have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches." ♦

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Quietly Rooting Against Saddam

The view from Iran.

BY TAMARA COFMAN WITTES

Tehran

ON THE CITY STREETS here, the legal requirement for women to dress with modesty is interpreted with varying degrees of strictness. Some women favor the full chador and, even indoors, wear long skirts and scarves that fully encircle the head and neck. But many others push the limits set by the Islamic Republic's "virtue police": a silk scarf knotted under the chin, a knee-length coat over bell-bottom jeans and platform shoes. In one restaurant I saw a woman who wore her headscarf so lightly and with such panache over her highlighted tresses that I thought I was looking at Benazir Bhutto, the glamorous former Pakistani prime minister. The variety of women's dress reflects modern sensibilities as well as the religious and ideological commitments of the Islamic Revolution.

Iran's attitude toward the war in Iraq reflects a similar dualism. Last month, I joined about 30 Europeans, Arabs, South Asians, and two other Americans here for a seminar on the Persian Gulf sponsored by the Iranian foreign ministry's think tank. The meeting, predictably, was dominated by discussion of the coming war in Iraq and its consequences for the region. The Iranian analysts and foreign ministry officials I spoke to combined a clear-eyed assessment of the war's dangers and regional impact with a bizarre sense of what drives American policy and how Iran might gain from the upcoming conflict.

Tamara Cofman Wittes is a Middle East specialist at the United States Institute of Peace. The views expressed here are her own.

It is noteworthy that Iran, unlike every other Middle Eastern nation, was not wracked by large antiwar demonstrations in the weeks before the fighting. Iranians hate Saddam with a passion, and fear him as well, leading them to view the American war as a way for Iran to get rid of a major headache without having to do the work itself. When asked at the public conference about the lack of street protests against the war, former diplomat Kazem Sajjadpour replied that Iranians were not inclined to show support for Saddam when Iranian veterans were still dying in hospitals from Iraqi chemical attacks suffered during the 1980-1989 war.

Indeed, at times Iranian officials were at pains to demonstrate that the Islamic Republic did not support a war, notwithstanding the government's behavior. Iran declared early on its attitude of "active neutrality" (a step beyond the country's "passive neutrality" in the 1991 Gulf War). Iran hosts the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the main Iraqi Shia opposition movement, and has encouraged SCIRI to participate in State Department-sponsored meetings of the Iraqi opposition. The Islamic Republic is also cooperating with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees to aid fleeing Iraqis, and has set up new refugee camps along its border.

Yet the Iranian government also obscures any private glee over Saddam's upcoming demise with regular condemnations of American policy. A comical example of this head-of-a-pin dance took place at the conference's opening session, when Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi laid out Iran's plan for a diplomatic solution

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to the standoff. Saddam, he said, should voluntarily open the political system to all communities and factions and hold a referendum on a shift to democracy. One of the first questions asked by the press, naturally, was whether Kharrazi had presented this new initiative to the Iraqi government. He admitted that he had not done so, nor did he have any immediate plans to. As we filed out of the lecture hall, the European diplomat next to me chuckled. The Iranians, he noted wryly, love to put forward initiatives that are dead on arrival.

Frustrated foreign ministry officials later told me that Kharrazi had discarded his staff-prepared text that morning and substituted this odd proposal after several phone conversations with the office of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. The awkward diplomatic initiative apparently resulted from the leader's need to square the obvious Iranian preference for regime change in Baghdad with the necessity of opposing American intervention in yet another next-door neighbor.

Iranian analysts clearly hope that the Iraq war might presage a new pragmatism and create possibilities for resolving longstanding U.S.-Iranian differences. One Iranian scholar noted U.S.-Iranian cooperation in the run-up to the war, and suggested that such tacit cooperation as was witnessed during the Afghanistan campaign, if repeated now, might bear fruit in repaired U.S.-Iranian ties. Judging from my experience, both Iranian civilians and the foreign ministry's career diplomats yearn for rapprochement with the United States.

But any real improvement in relations would require addressing the issues at the core of American concerns: Iran's support for terror groups and its alarming nuclear program. Continued Iranian support for Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, along with the newly exposed Iranian determination to master a full nuclear fuel cycle, are real and troubling issues for the United States, ones with even greater salience since September 11. And with respect to these core issues, Iranian thinking becomes almost delusional. The realism evident in Iranian attitudes toward the invasion of Iraq is matched by fantastical views about the sources of America's Middle East policy and the prospects for U.S.-Iranian relations in the wake of the war.

Iran's main worry, judging by the flood of queries I received on the subject, is whether, after the forcible regime change in Baghdad, Tehran is next on the target list. The United States would, of course, prefer a fully accountable, pluralistic Iranian government to the existing intolerant theocracy. But Iran's political structure, truth be told, is not the feature of the Islamic Republic that ranks it among the Axis of Evil. And Iran's foreign policy elite either cannot or will not face up to America's chief concern: the sponsorship of terrorists avowedly hostile to the United States by a regime that spills bile about America as a "Great Satan," while its centrifuges are busy enriching uranium.

These otherwise bright and savvy Iranian foreign policy experts, rather, sidestep the problem of Iran's external behavior and the threat it poses to American interests by holding to the same conspiracy theories and ideological preconceptions that dominate Arab opinion of American foreign policy: that it is held hostage to a warmongering coalition of neoconservatives and southern evangelicals; that the United States' determination to overthrow Saddam is a greed-driven imperial plot to control regional oil deposits and reestablish Anglo-American dominance of the Persian Gulf; and that the war in Iraq is a plot hatched in Tel Aviv to serve Israel's security interests.

The Islamic Republic's leaders are therefore convinced that the United States is out to get them, as well, and they are consequently seeking means of deterrence. They seem to think that the outcome of the Iraq war will give them strong cards to play in this regard. But ironically, and perhaps tragically, the Iranian government seems to see advantages in precisely those issues that give American policymakers the greatest concern.

One well-connected analyst I spoke to lamented the senior clerical leadership's dogmatic support for Hezbollah and Palestinian terrorist groups. He suggested that, rather than revolutionary ideology or aspirations for regional influence, the driving force behind this policy was the elite leadership's concern for self-preservation. In his analysis, the small group at the top of the Islamic Republic believes that support for Hezbollah can be used as a bargaining chip against direct U.S. interference in domestic Iranian politics. In reality, this is exactly backwards, for the regime's support of terrorism heightens American hostility and increases the likelihood of confrontation. Indeed, the United States has given no indication that it is willing to buy off state sponsors of terrorism. And if Iran attempts to wield such support as a playing card by, say, ratcheting up the violence in southern Lebanon, the country is likely to feel a quick and unpleasant backlash from an American administration determined to repay a "blood debt," in Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's words, to Hezbollah.

The conflagration in Iraq will undoubtedly shift the regional balance of power in Iran's favor. But whether that shift is ephemeral or longlasting will depend on how wisely Iran plays its cards. The odd misperceptions that seem to shape Iranian thinking—that its troublesome overseas engagements are a source of strength rather than a vulnerability, that the United States is of a mind to make bargains over support for international terrorism, and that the American government, while held hostage to Israeli interests and bent on regional transformation, is nonetheless likely to improve relations with an Iran unwilling to modify its behavior—suggest that the Islamic Republic is likely, as it has in the past, to overplay its hand. ♦

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A License to Clone

And a requirement to kill.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY clear that the bio-anarchists leading the charge to Brave New World want a virtually unlimited license to engage in human cloning. The proof is in the legislation they keep trying to pass.

It is bad enough that in Washington, senators Orin Hatch, Republican of Utah, and Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, have introduced the Human Cloning Ban and Stem Cell Research Protection Act of 2003 (S. 303), which would permit the creation of human clone embryos for research, requiring their destruction after the fourteenth day of development. But the much more radical license that bio-anarchists seek is embodied in state legislation introduced beneath the radar of the national media.

If these bills ever became law, researchers could create human embryos for the purposes of experimentation, implant them, and allow them to gestate through the ninth month of pregnancy, by which point they would have to be exploited for research and killed.

New Jersey was the first state whose legislature attempted to create this broad cloning license. The bill—S. 1909—was a sneaky piece of legislation. Its ostensible purpose was to permit stem cell research on embryos left over from in vitro fertilization. But lurking in the text, clearly discernible upon careful reading, was a more sweeping agenda.

First, the legislation would have explicitly authorized the manufacture of human embryos via the cloning procedure known as somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT). Second, unlike the Hatch-Feinstein bill, the legislation would *not* have proscribed the implantation of clone embryos into a woman's womb. This is important, because if an act is not illegal, it is legal. Finally, the legislation would have made the "cloning of a human being" a "crime of the first degree."

If these bills became law, researchers could create human embryos for experimentation and allow them to gestate through the ninth month, at which point they would have to be killed.

The key to understanding the dangerous scope of this legislation is its definition of the term "human being":

> As used in this section, "cloning a human being" means the replication of a human individual by cultivating a cell with genetic material *through the egg, embryo, fetal and newborn stages into a new human individual.* (My emphasis.)

Since, under S. 1909, implantation of a clone embryo would be legal, and only the cloning of a "new human individual" all the way through the "newborn" stage would be illegal, the bill would have authorized the gestation of a human clone fetus for any period up through nine months. To avoid criminality, presumably the fetus would have to be aborted, at latest, just before birth.

This bill passed the New Jersey Senate without a dissenting vote. From there, it went to the New Jersey Assembly (A. 2840), where despite warnings about its implications the Health and Human Services Committee passed it on to the Assembly floor. Only when the odious details began to become publicly known did the sponsors withdraw it. And even then, the governor and some state newspaper editorials criticized opponents as standing against medical progress.

Perhaps it was all a big mistake. Perhaps the authors of the New Jersey bill never really meant to authorize clone implantation and gestation through the ninth month. If so, a significant number of New Jersey legislators voted for legislation they did not understand.

But now, that lame excuse won't wash. A Democratic state senator from El Paso named Eliot Shapleigh has just introduced S.B. 1034 into the Texas senate. It's a bill with language almost identical to that of New Jersey's discredited S. 1909.

Like the New Jersey bill, S.B. 1034 purports to be about embryonic stem cell research. Like the New Jersey bill, it would authorize the creation of embryos through SCNT without banning the implantation of clone embryos into a woman's womb. Instead, just as in New Jersey, the bill would outlaw only "the replication of a human individual by cultivating a cell with the individual's genetic material through the egg, embryo, fetal, and newborn stages into a new human individual."

One bill with this enabling language might be written off as an aberration. But two?

It seems there is a method to this madness, but my call to Shapleigh's office went unreturned. Obviously, the time has come for the media to show a little skepticism about the supposedly benign human cloning agenda, and find out who it is that wants such a breathtakingly radical cloning license, and why. ♦

Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow for the Discovery Institute. He is the author of Culture of Death: The Assault on Medical Ethics in America.

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Babysitting the Press in Kuwait

A PAO's work is never done.

By Matt Labash

Kuwait City

It is easy and fashionable to ridicule journalists. They can be loutish and rude, obsequious and mercenary. Their careers are made off of others' misfortune, and they're forever thrusting themselves forward just to bring you the bad news. According to media-bashing stereotypes, they are chiselers and corner-cutters, spitball artists and confidence men. But I will say one thing for the species—and here, I don't count myself among them—they are, almost to the man and woman, some of the ballsiest people I know.

Some 500 of my colleagues have literally gone into combat by embedding with troops. Scores of others have made suicide runs into Iraq without the benefit of being escorted by M-16-toting Marines. What many lack in brains, they make up for in balls. They are guys like *Slate*'s Nate Thayer, who is camped out in Baghdad, and more willing to become a human shield than a journalistic deserter. They are guys like *Newsweek*'s Scott Johnson, who just flipped his truck in the desert after having it riddled with bullets, barely escaping with his life. They might not do these things for the lofty, noble purposes of duty, honor, and country. But they do them—often for no other reason than that they're there to be done.

The counterpart to the war reporter is the military public affairs officer. They too suffer sometimes unfair stereotypes—many of them perpetuated by journalists. We often cast them as neutered soldiers and company men—the friends of bureaucracy and obstructionism, the enemies of access and truth. But Major Chris Hughes, a Marine public affairs officer, is not one of these.

Hughes works the graveyard shift at the Coalition Press Information Center here at the Kuwait City Hilton. (It's actually the day shift back home, on account of the time difference.) My advance men in Kuwait told me to get to know him, and to become his fluffer—that he was a gregarious sort you could do business with, which is necessary for unembedded reporters, since what stands between us and any military access is the often uncooperative figure of the public affairs officer. When I initially called him, we set up an appointment for midnight, which he had to move to 1:00, then 2:00 A.M. Still overwhelmed with calls at the appointed time, he kicked our interview to 5:00 A.M., which he then moved back once more until he knocked off at 8:00 in the morning. I initially tried to sweeten the pot, offering to bring over some special-recipe "Listerine." But he declined politely. "Can't do it," he said. "There's a war on, man."

When I met up with him outside the press desk at the end of his normal 12-16 hour shift, he was bleary-eyed and haggard. The night shift, he says, is "kind of a self-inflicted wound. Bad things happen at night. And last night was a bummer." Indeed, it was. After this conflict is over, historians will debate its various turning points. But Sunday, March 23, will be known as the day the war became realer and darker—when bad things happened to good people.

A British RAF Tornado had been accidentally blown out of the sky by a U.S. Patriot missile. An attempted fragging incident at the 101st Airborne Division's camp in northern Kuwait left one soldier dead and 16 injured. Throughout southern Iraq, soldiers and Marines were getting chewed up by non-uniformed militia types after towns had supposedly been taken. Dead Americans began showing up on Al-Jazeera, their bodies set out like grocery window displays. Unembedded journalists, cowboying around hostile territory without military protection, were being felled. Three ITV news crew members were missing and presumed dead after coming under fire in southern Iraq. And in the north, an Australian television cameraman was the victim of a car bomb.

After spending all night discussing these horrors, Hughes makes his way with me to the incongruous Songbird Café, where pretty Filipina waitresses offer salmon on focaccia to anyone who still has an appetite. Hughes

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Getty / Joe Raedle

Journalists stand in line waiting to receive their nuclear, biological, and chemical gear from the U.S. Army in Kuwait.

doesn't. He sticks with the Diet Coke he brought himself. He's much more interested in sleeping than eating.

Looks-wise, Hughes is all Marine, squared off and squinty, a young James Caan whose eyes slant upward from their outside corners in, forming quotation marks around his expressions. He has worked numerous media operations in some pretty hairy settings—places like East Timor and Afghanistan. And it never ceases to amaze him the cavalier attitude journalists often bring to war. "With the old guys and gals," says the 37-year-old Hughes, "they know the deal. Unfortunately, a lot of people don't. With the work-up for the whole embed [of which he was a big champion], the mentality was kind of 'We're going camping.' No you're not. You're going to war. People will die."

Hughes says that coverage-wise, embedding was the way to go. A former combat engineer and artillery guy, he never had designs on being a journalist himself ("though if Ollie North can be on TV, maybe I can too," he jokes). But he is a huge fan of the you-are-there stylings of Ernie Pyle, who, he kindly reminds me, was shot dead on Ie Shima island while covering World War II. Though he admires their nerve, in this conflict, Hughes is not a big endorser of unilateral reporters. "No one has any business running for that border as an independent operator, that is foolish. No story is worth dying for. And these guys running pell mell through the battlefield, have no situational awareness. That's what's getting them killed. The people running around the battlefield present an incredible dilemma to the operational commander. Suddenly he has to think twice before engaging a target, because, 'My God—is that a news crew?'"

After blurting out this harsh judgment, Hughes almost seems contrite: "That's a helluva statement for me to make—saying they have no business there. In their mind, they have every right to be there, that's where the story is. But the thing that concerns me is that they're putting the young Marine's life at risk. The kid's now got to think, 'Is that a news crew I saw earlier, or is that my enemy?'"

Hughes volunteers that military public affairs shops have screwed up in the past—keeping journalists away from battle in nearly every post-Vietnam conflict. "The thing I've always liked about having media present is it tells that Marine or soldier just how important their job is. If CNN is in your fighting hole, what you're doing is important. And that's tremendous. I think Marines and soldiers will do anything they're asked, but I think they want people to know what's happening. They want the

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folks to know how it went down, what they did. They don't want to die and not have their story told."

It is nearly a journalistic article of faith that if you have to deal with public affairs types, you are best off dealing with Marines. While every service has a good story to tell, the smallest and feistiest service regularly tells theirs best. Hughes says that this perception is largely fueled by the kind of ethos set forth by retired Marine Lieutenant General Victor Krulak (father of former commandant Charles Krulak) in his book *First to Fight*. "He basically laid it out," says Hughes, "that the United States does not need a Marine Corps. The other service branches could divvy up our mission, and cut us up and do away with us. But his conclusion was that the United States wanted a Marine Corps. And that's a big difference—the need vs. the want." They are the service that has most come to stand for service. "I think the better Marines I've ever worked with recognize that and use the media as a vehicle to communicate to the American taxpayer what we are doing with their money and their kids. There's an idealism. It's a great story to tell—particularly one in an environment like this, what the Marines are willing to sacrifice. Not to take shots at the other services at all—but this one," he says proudly, "is mine."

Getty / Abdullah Zaheeruddin

Marines and journalists in Salladdin, March 24

As a gatekeeper, he recognizes the natural tension between serving his commanders and serving the journalists seeking access to them. To get that access, he and his public affairs cohorts have seen it all: attempted bribes, verbal violence, and sex-appeal sorties, where news organizations will put their most attractive news bunnies and Scud studs forward to try to bat their lashes at both male and female PAOs. Not only would succumbing to female charms jeopardize his credibility, Hughes says. But it would also land him in trouble with his wife.

Differing missions, aside, however, Hughes says something I have never heard another uniformed type offer: "We are more like each other than we are different. Any Marine or soldier worth their weight wants to be where things are happening. They want to find out if they've got what it takes, if they can function at the highest level. And this is it. I think people that work in the media are the same way. And I think that's gonna be one of the great lessons learned from this experience. We knew that once, and we forgot it."

Around this point, Hughes worries that "I'm making a complete ass of myself," by blathering on. "I don't like seeing stuff written about me and PAOs," he says. "It's an interesting story, I hope to write on it someday myself. But there's got to be a level of humility. If I were the commander, the question I would ask would be, 'Hey, while you were running your mouth to the media, did you think maybe there was a lance corporal that should be talking to them?' They're our best spokesmen. It doesn't get any better than having some 19-year-old kid talking to you."

As he says this, he yawns. It's about time for him to rack out. "I'm beat, man. I've had a long, ugly night." But not before I get off one more question. I ask him what about this job—a job that people like me have derided—gives him the most pleasure. He suddenly looks revived. "You know when you really hit a long ball," he says, "when you've got the leading news organizations on planet earth covering your op, putting really good stuff down range. It's a rush." This sounds like a statement of elation, but as he says this, his voice catches abruptly, and his eyes grow red-rimmed. He stares hard at the table, and scribbles furiously on a post-it note until he can regain his composure. A full minute goes by before he can talk, and watching him, I am the same. He has spent an entire night talking about dead fighting men and journalists. "It's been a long night," he says quietly, finally looking up. "We're losing guys left and right. And so are you." ♦

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"BULLY FOR YOU, UNCLE SAM"

Dear Sam,

It's me, your old friend, Recorded History. Long before you were born, there was me. Share my letter with all your nephews and your nieces if you please.

Might alone does not make right. It takes much more. America knows it. You do. So do I. And why?

In street language, where brain rubs shoulders with brawn, there's a saying common to both. That it's not what you do. It's the way, how you do it. English is as difficult a mother tongue as, for instance, is Arabic. The same word carries different meanings. Specifically, "bully" is good. "Bully" can be bad.

Saddam and assorted terrorists call you, Sam and yours, "bullies", the bad kind. Sad to say and not easy to tolerate, even some of your countrymen think the same about you and yours. But speech in America is so cheap, it's free.

What kind of "bully" wages war and wins it? What kind of "bully" puts the losers, Germany and Japan back on their feet again? Why, of course, America does! Who else ever would? And that's Saddam's favorite "bully," the United States? Absurd!

Sam, don't forget the silent. Sacred American military cemeteries. They ennoble the many battlefields of France. Countless G.I.s, in the springtime of their lives, made the ultimate sacrifice and never asked the reason why. The sod, under which they lie buried, is far away from home and loved ones.

Seemingly endless rows of crosses and stars of David are as much a lovely kind of new white floral shoots, as they are, in truth, deeply touching and beautiful monuments of everlasting memory. The world has not yet found and, maybe never will, a fitting name to bind together these same noble stars and crosses.

Alas, my dear friend, Sam, what kind of gratitude does the erstwhile gracious France offer its friend in need and deed, America, other than to brand it a "bully?" Did not this same "bully" fight to free the stranglehold around the throat of a defeated and occupied France? Did not this slandered "bully" help rescue France from choking to death between the brutal hands of Nazi Germany, its mortal enemy?

Then the ghastly irony involving this one time tyrant Deutchland. That rogue nation then, with apparent glee, "bullied" millions of innocent Jews to death in hellish concentration camps. What irony, you may well ask? Of course, the terrible yet true one that involves the American Jewish community. Unhesitatingly, incredibly, unbelievably, along with their charitable fellow citizens, after the war with Germany had ended, these concerned and generous human beings of Jewish faith helped the guilty and convicted German nation to recover once again. What kind of 'bullies' are such kindly Americans? They helped to feed and clothe the villains who, a short time earlier, did all they could to liquidate their race.

Sam, just wait a while. As I am Recorded History, I repeat myself. Soon, God willing, America will triumph in Iraq. This same great "bully" will see to it that Iraq is a winner too. Remember France. Remember Germany and Japan. Remember me, for I will always be Recorded History. The American "bully" is totally and commendably devoid of any kind of greed for another's territory or treasure.

Sam, you don't have to ascend a 'bully pulpit' anytime, any place. I will do it for you. I'm the impartial judge of things. I have a better understanding of Arabic and English than any other orator who ever spoke in either tongue.

So rely on me, Recorded History, to speak only what's the truth. My eyes and ears were made to see and hear in everyone's same or equivalent paradise. The last resort, left to anyone, should be the same for everyone. As Recorded History, I serve whomever happens to be my God. I do this with the precise same fervor and devotion serving the God of Muslims or someone else's deity. That's only fair. You have my word for it. It's clearly my public record as Recorded History.

Your faithful friend,
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Chirac's Grand Ambition

France's bid to lead the rest of the world against America.

By Christopher Caldwell

Paris

France's foreign minister Dominique de Villepin made a visit last week to London's International Institute for Strategic Studies—he saw no members of the Blair cabinet—and refused to answer the question: "Who do you want to win the war?" (The French government later issued a clarification, saying that de Villepin was already on record as wishing victory for the U.S.-led coalition.) Meanwhile, the latest edition of *Le Canard Enchaîné*, France's weekly paper of humor and political gossip, claims French president Jacques Chirac told a meeting of his counselors on Monday, March 24: "If the Americans announce that they have discovered such arms [i.e. weapons of mass destruction], they should offer evidence that the arms are really of Iraqi origin." Such incidents show how tough Chirac is willing to be—and how big a price he is willing to pay—to press France's case against the U.S. war in Iraq. What's in it for him? What's in it for his country?

When it comes to politics, notes Jean-Michel Helvig, the editorial page editor of the daily *Libération*, "you can never totally rule out sincerity." Chirac's views are much like those of 87 percent of his countrymen—of every political persuasion. Most Frenchmen believe the war against terrorism has been going perfectly fine until now, Helvig says. The proof is that, since September 11, al Qaeda has failed to strike against the heart of the West, hitting only its periphery—in Bali, Jordan, and Tunisia, for instance. A longtime right-wing adviser to Chirac agrees. "The president is a creature of instinct," he says. "A great deal in the American account of the Iraq situation sounded false to him." Even Claude Angéli of *Le Canard Enchaîné*, who co-authored a book about France's (and Chirac's) relations with Saddam, is unconvinced of the need to invade. "No one [in France] understands this war," he says. "If people are marching in the streets defending Saddam Hussein *en connaissance de cause*, you can tell the American case is weak."

But one can never rule out politics, either. Chirac's stance against the United States has offered him powerful insulation against domestic problems that were gathering when the Bush administration brought the issue of Saddam Hussein to a head. In February, France's unemployment rate rose by 0.8 percent—the third consecutive monthly leap. It now stands at 9.2 percent. Chirac had come to power last year promising (in a page stolen from the 2000 campaign of George W. Bush) a 30-percent tax reduction over the next five years. After splashily doling out 5 percent of it last year, his government now finds itself out of money. Chirac and his prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin are required under the European Union's "stability pact" to keep their budget deficit under 3 percent, and this year they're not even going to come close. So they plan to ask the European Commission to exempt France from the stability pact for this year, citing "exceptional circumstances"—namely, the war in Iraq. (No such exemptions were sought by the countries actually involved in the war.)

In Germany, Gerhard Schröder's political headaches show that there are limits to how well a European politician can insulate himself from bread-and-butter matters by striking a popular antiwar stance. For now, Chirac has the support of the whole of his parliament, with the exception of two fellow conservatives, Alain Madelin and Pierre Lellouche, who are vocally pro-war. But a considerably larger group of politicians worries that the government's attitude toward the United States has been too hard-edged, and this group includes the most popular member of Chirac's cabinet, interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy. (This is one of the reasons that Sarkozy's name does not figure in the swirl of rumors in Paris about a possible replacement for the feckless Raffarin come early summer.)

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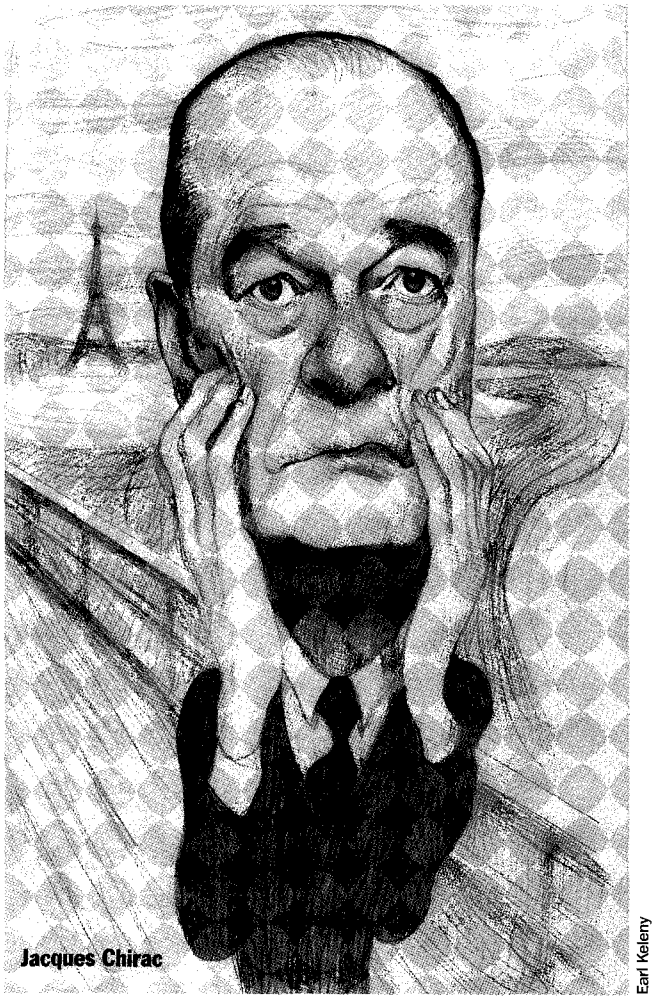
In fact, it is worth questioning how deep the widespread French antiwar sentiment is in the first place. The much-publicized anti-American rallies in recent weeks have been noteworthy for their noise, but they draw from an extremely narrow range of society. The one I attended in Rouen on March 22 mustered about 1,500 people, roughly evenly divided between three groups. There were young Arabs and *beurs* (carrying placards in Arabic). There were aging Stalinists (carrying placards reading *Défense militaire inconditionelle de la Corée du Nord!* and *Pour une révolution politique prolétaire!*). And there were representatives of France's anti-globalization movement (whose placards included an amiably offbeat one reading—in English—*Masturbation is not a crime!*). These groups, particularly the last, may represent a force in French democracy, but (a) they are not evidence of any kind of middle-class groundswell in *la France profonde*, and (b) they express loyalties that can easily be wrested from a basically conservative politician like Chirac.


Jacques Chirac

Earl Keleny

When intimates of Chirac discuss his thinking on Iraq, they like to stress American blunders that began poisoning the relationship after September 11. Some of these blunders were strategic, according to the French account. For the Chirac entourage, Vice President Dick Cheney has a special place in the pantheon of blame. But whereas in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, Cheney is the public symbol of America's doctrine of "preventive war," in France he stands for what former foreign minister Hubert Védrine derided as American *simplisme* on Middle Eastern matters—specifically, the belief that once Saddam is removed from power, a domino effect of positive consequences will render the Arab world's other problems easier to resolve.

Whether or not this is true of Cheney, French politicians, almost to a man, exhibit a parallel *simplisme* under which, once the Israeli-Palestinian standoff is resolved to the Palestinians' liking, the differences between Islam and the West will similarly shrivel. (As Chirac told Egypt's *Al-Hayat* newspaper during his November 2001 circuit through the Middle East, "The tragic persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict underlies resentment and frustration in the Muslim world. . . . Extremism feeds off it, and uses it as a pretext.")

At times, however, Chirac's circle views America's fault as diplomatic rather than strategic. His advisers insist that they did not believe the United States was bent on war last September when Chirac, along with Tony Blair, pressured the United States into proceeding through a U.N. resolution. At that time, Chirac wasn't bent on avoiding war either. He believed that the U.S. military buildup in Kuwait and the (ultimately failed) diplomatic preparations for an invasion force in Turkey were necessary. And on January 7, Chirac even delivered an address to the French armed forces in which he warned them to be "ready for any eventuality."

In this reading, the turning point came on Monday, January 13, when Chirac's top foreign policy adviser, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, met in Washington with national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage, and, according to a source close to Chirac, "came back with the conviction that the U.S. would go to war no matter what." A week later came the moment Americans view as the turning point: De Villepin, after begging Powell to break his Martin Luther King Day obligations to attend U.N. meetings, after having dinner with him the night before, announced France's de facto defection from the use-of-force coalition in a press briefing after the session. And there France's position has remained. "We are not sure we're right," says one Chirac aide. "But the problem is, America claims to see a direct threat from Iraq, and hasn't explained it to us."

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One must not be too credulous about the French narration of diplomatic blunders. Last week, *Le Monde* questioned the insistence of France and other European countries that the United States squandered a lot of credibility by not using NATO to carry out operations in Afghanistan. In fact, according to *Le Monde*, France insisted during talks in Washington in the earliest days after September 11, 2001, that it was not ready to wage war against any poor country under the U.S. aegis, and that it was not ready to join in any more general campaign against "state sponsors of terrorism." Complaints about the non-involvement of NATO emerged only later.

France's defection from the American war effort has not been a pure public-relations windfall, even in Europe. At a press conference before his departure for the United States, British prime minister Tony Blair warned that the alternative to the present international system "is this concept of rival poles of power in the world, and that is a profoundly dangerous concept." More bruisingly, the philosopher André Glucksmann, one of France's rare pro-war intellectuals, bemoans that France's position has thrown it into alliance with Russia, which Glucksmann calls, with reference to Chechnya, "the only country in the world today that is fighting a genocidal war."

Those close to Chirac acknowledge that the president has made a few mistakes. Chief among these was accusing the pro-American governments of Eastern Europe of being "badly brought up." ("He *wanted* to be undiplomatic," says one adviser. "But he wound up going beyond undiplomatic.") And many politicians on Chirac's side worry that he has become "intoxicated" with his stance. It would be hard not to be, when events have given Chirac such a high profile outside of France that Germany's leading newsmagazine, *Der Spiegel*, now describes him as "The Kaiser of Europe."

No one in France denies that the institutions out of which postwar Europe was built have been put at risk by the Franco-American *contretemps*. Says one former Chirac aide, "Our foreign policy is now based on the only trump that is left to us: the seat at the Security Council"—not promising in a weakened U.N. Most deeply damaged is NATO, into which Chirac himself brought France in 1996. The European Union, too, has been split into two factions, and Chirac is said to estimate the chances Europe can emerge intact from the wreckage at 1 in 2. But there is another way of looking at the damage. In the U.N., France appears to be taking up a role as leader of "*les peuples*" who oppose the Iraq war. In Europe, France hopes to engage a new "hard core"—Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg—in an "E.U. defense initiative" that would bring the continent a step closer to military independence from the United States. And that may be the big thing France gains from its Iraq position. It is a measure of how far the rupture has gone that certain Frenchmen—certain powerful ones—may now view the overturning of the postwar order as less a risk than an opportunity. ♦

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Onward, Christian Pacifists

The debates of the 1930s repeat themselves.

By Joseph Loconte

Even with the start of the war to unseat Saddam Hussein, religious leaders continue to oppose the use of force as unnecessary and unjust. Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, laments the "failures of heart, mind and will that led to this war." The Church World Service, an association of mostly Protestant churches and relief agencies, sees only "horrendous humanitarian consequences" ahead.

The criticism carries a familiar ring. Liberal Protestants led the peace movement just prior to World War II—and sustained it even after the German blitzkrieg in Europe, when all rational hope of negotiations had collapsed. Finding endless reasons to oppose a military response, they became in effect apologists for Nazi aggression. And yet, their voices move among us still, animating marches, sermons, and proclamations. They almost make us forget that most of the churchmen of that earlier generation finally discarded their "sentimental illusions" about taming a tyrant.

Indeed, the most grievous flaw of the 1930s peace movement was its blindness to the gulf separating totalitarian regimes from Western democracies. War critics assumed the European conflict was merely a collision of selfish national interests. From 1938 to 1941, American Protestant groups issued no less than 50 statements about how to achieve a just and durable peace. But barely a handful argued that the defeat of Nazism was essential to international justice.

John Haynes Holmes, a Unitarian minister in New York, decried the "fundamentally immoral clash of imperialisms" at work again in Europe. "If America goes into the war," he wrote in December 1940, "it will not be for idealistic reasons but to serve her own imperialistic interests." In a statement urging U.S. neutrality, the Methodist General Conference declared that "the mood of either victor or vanquished in war cannot aid peace."

Many Protestant ministers, in fact, saw little difference between the German Reich and Anglo-American democracy; they indulged in the same self-loathing critique that energizes many protesters now. "If evil is today rampant, this has a cause," explained the Federal Council of Churches in a 1940 statement. "Through our action or non-action we exerted a profound influence on the course of world events. That course has generated widespread unrest, great violence and immense disaster." Rev. Holmes, also head of the executive committee of the American Civil Liberties Union, echoed many ministers when he called Hitler "the veritable incarnation of our nationalistic, capitalistic and militaristic era." A German victory, he said, should be viewed as "the punishment for our transgressions."

Albert Palmer, a leader in the United Church of Christ, rejected condemnation of Hitler as "short-circuited, adolescent hatred of individual leaders." Terrible as the war in France had been, he reasoned in June 1940, "would not the Allies have done much the same thing in Germany if they had got there first?" Charles Clayton Morrison, editor of the influential *Christian Century* magazine, likewise saw no important distinction between the warring factions. "It is not a war to preserve civilization!" he exclaimed. "It is the war itself that is destroying civilization—destroying it increasingly with each day that the war lasts, and destroying it definitively if it lasts to the point of victory, *no matter which side wins*." (Emphasis added.)

This exercise in moral equivalency continued even after the Nazi war machine had rumbled through Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, and Belgium. It continued after the fall of France and the mas-

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sive bombing of London. It continued even as the brutal realities of life under Nazi rule were laid bare.

War critics fixated on the political conditions that helped justify German adventurism. Methodist minister Ernest Fremont Tittle, for example, speculated that Nazi aggression "may be provoked by bitter belief . . . that there is now no peaceful way of solving a desperate economic problem." As a result, Protestant intellectuals produced a series of utterly unrealistic peace proposals. The editors of *Christian Century* called repeatedly for a peace conference to establish a "political and economic framework in which the tensions over these pre-war issues would disappear."

Ministers kept up their appeals for peace talks and U.S. neutrality until the moment America entered the war. "We see clearly that a war for democracy is a contradiction in terms, that war itself is democracy's chief enemy," said Baptist luminary Harry Emerson Fosdick of the Park Avenue Baptist Church (now Riverside Church) in New York City. Rev. Tittle, who organized the peace movement of the Methodist Church, was unyielding. "It would not, in my judgment, be an act of insanity to seek an official statement of peace aims" from Germany, he wrote in February 1941, but rather "an act of high statesmanship." Pacifism as a national strategy, he added, "would pursue a policy not of appeasement but of reconciliation."

All this after Hitler had broken every promise to European leaders about his territorial ambitions, subjugated or murdered entire populations, and constructed ghettos for Jews across Europe. There was, in fact, little mention of Nazi persecution of the Jews amid this antiwar rhetoric—despite widespread reporting of the facts in both the religious and mainstream press.

Stephen Wise, president of the World Jewish Congress, was one of the first religious figures to see the larger implications of Hitler's hatreds. "Jews may yet come to understand that their position in the world is imperiled as never before in history," he wrote in 1938. "The democracies may yet conclude that they will either stay the power of Nazism and Fascism or be destroyed." Most Christian leaders, however, stubbornly resisted this conclusion. They failed to judge Hitler's threat to civilization by the vicious nature of his anti-Semitism—just as today's war opponents downplay Saddam's human-rights abuses. By viewing Hitler's war aims in isolation from his regime, they persuaded themselves he could be negotiated with or, at worst, contained.

The *Christian Century*, for example, suggested that massive peace movements outside Germany would soften the Third Reich. "The internal effects upon the populations of even dictator countries would surely weaken their military morale as they contemplated a prospective world order in which the real causes of the war . . . would at least be on the way to being removed." Albert Palmer, president of Chicago Theological Seminary, admitted that world domination by the Nazis would likely follow an invasion of Britain—yet remained untroubled by the prospect. "Can military force do much against soul force which folds its arms and bides its day?" he asked. "Without military opposition the Hitlers wither away."

Christian forgiveness, these men argued, would provide the solvent. "Forgiveness heals wounds and prevents new ones from being made," wrote Palmer, who liked to quote from the Sermon on the Mount. "If your enemy hunger, feed him—and understand him. Love your enemies and do them good." Like their counterparts today, religious liberals of the 1930s assumed the Prince of Peace was on their side. The Spirit of Jesus, they intoned, could never sanction the violence of war. "The Son of God . . . resists evil but never with its own weapons," wrote Rev. Tittle. "He resists it with truth and love even unto death." Or as John Haynes Holmes asked rhetorically: "Can anyone read Jesus' gospel, and study his life in fulfillment of that gospel, without seeing that love is a weapon more potent than the sword?"

Such piety in the cause of neutrality angered a growing company of Protestant thinkers, known as the "Christian realists." Chastened by the devastation of World War I, most of them had vowed to oppose war whatever the circumstances. But they hadn't reckoned on a Hitler. "Before the events that followed the invasion of Belgium and Holland I was living in a world of illusion," admitted John Bennett, professor of theology at the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley. The defeat of France, he said, "opened my eyes to the fact that the alternative to successful resistance to Germany is the extension of the darkest political tyranny imaginable over the whole of Europe." Calling pleas for negotiation "a euphemism for surrender," Bennett became a tireless agitator for U.S. engagement.

No religious leader attacked the false promises of the peace movement more bitterly than Henry Pitney Van Dusen, professor at Union Theological Seminary. Van Dusen noted that a peace initiative by the *Christian Century* in May 1940 would summon officials from 18 "neutral" nations to Rome—except that 14 of the 18 were already bound to either side in the struggle, making diplomatic action impossible. Two of the remaining states had just been defeated and reduced to servitude by the Axis powers, while the proposed host city was a center of fascist

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Bettmann / Corbis

Antiwar protest, 1930s style

aggression. "The proposal has less meaning than Alice's Wonderland, for the latter had at least symbolic reference to reality," Van Dusen wrote. "In any Christian, escapism is always pitiable. In one charged with influence over the views and decisions of others in days like these, it is unforgivable."

Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr had announced his opposition to war in 1923. "I am done with this business," he said. Ten years later he upbraided Winston Churchill for his "unyielding imperial ambition." But by the Munich Agreement of 1938, which delivered Czechoslovakia into Nazi hands, Niebuhr reversed course. He emerged as the most forceful advocate for all-out war. A socialist critic of democracy, Niebuhr nevertheless scorned those who obsessed over America's shortcomings to rationalize German militarism. "It is sheer moral perversity," he said, "to equate the inconsistencies of a democratic civilization with the brutalities which modern tyrannical States practice." He finally broke with the left over its "moralistic illusions" about restraining fascism. Christian forgiveness by itself would not stop this gathering storm, he argued; a deeper view of Christianity's confrontation with evil was required.

Niebuhr's deeper view never ignored political and economic injustice. Yet he insisted that the origins of German aggression couldn't be understood apart from the problem of individual sin. For Niebuhr, sin involved both the corruption of conscience and the existence of the demonic. Hence Hitler's fury: It was fed by a pagan religion of self-glorification. Niebuhr's stubborn belief in the influence of evil in the human heart makes the contemporary search for terrorism's "root causes" look badly misguided.

"Nazi tyranny never could have reached such proportions as to be able to place the whole of Europe under its ban, if sentimental illusions about the character of the evil which Europe was facing had not been combined with less noble motives for tolerating Nazi aggression," Niebuhr wrote. Failure to resist this tyranny, he warned, meant assisting in its triumph—and in a defeat for the cause of Christ. "This form of pacifism is not only heretical when judged by the standards of the total gospel. It is equally heretical when judged by the facts of human existence."

In May 1940, the Christian realists issued a manifesto called "America's Responsibility in the Present Crisis." Coming more than 18 months before the United States would enter the war, it ranks as one of the period's most clear-eyed assessments of the fascist threat. "A decisive German victory, now an ominous possibility, would menace not only democratic government but the most elemental securities and liberties for the peoples of the whole of Western Europe," the manifesto began. The signers admitted the ambiguities of a postwar world and the challenge of preserving peace and security. Nevertheless, they called halting Germany's aggression a prerequisite to world order. "When men or nations must choose between two evils, the choice of the lesser evil becomes Christian duty," they wrote. "That is the alternative confronting the American people now."

Neither President Bush nor Britain's Tony Blair is a theologian, but both possess enough moral realism to measure the evil of Saddam Hussein. "One reason the U.N. was founded after the Second World War," Bush said in announcing his ultimatum to Saddam, "was to confront aggressive dictators actively and early, before they can attack the innocent and destroy the peace." In his speech before the House of Commons, Blair lamented that the world must "learn the lesson all over again that weakness in the face of a threat from a tyrant is the surest way not to peace but to war." That sounds a lot like the warning by the Christian realists of an earlier era. "This is the hour when democracy must justify itself by capacity for effective decision, or risk destruction or disintegration," they cautioned in their 1940 manifesto. "Europe is dotted with the ruins of right decisions taken too late." ♦

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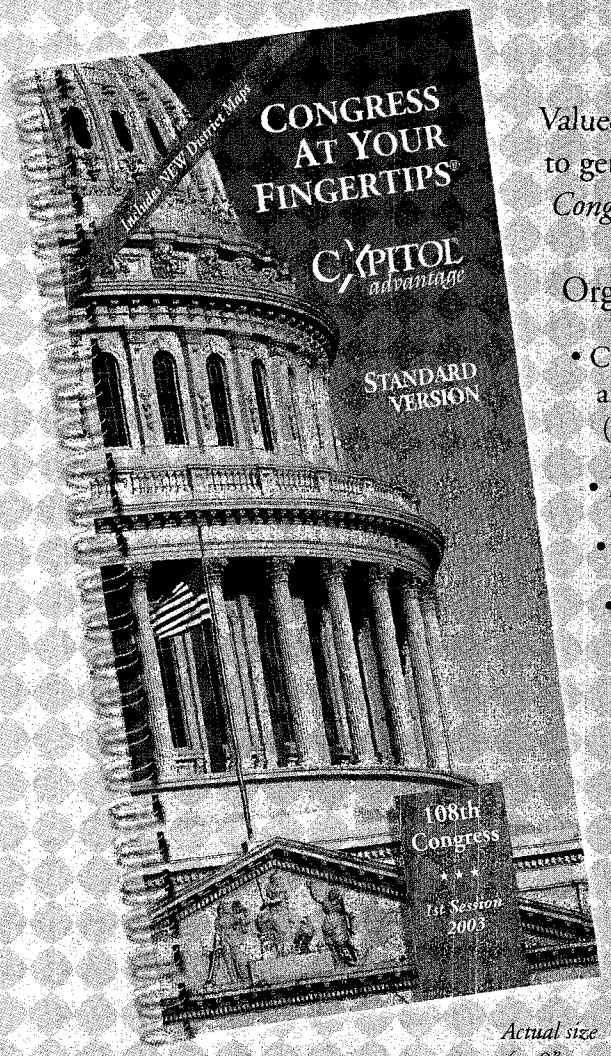

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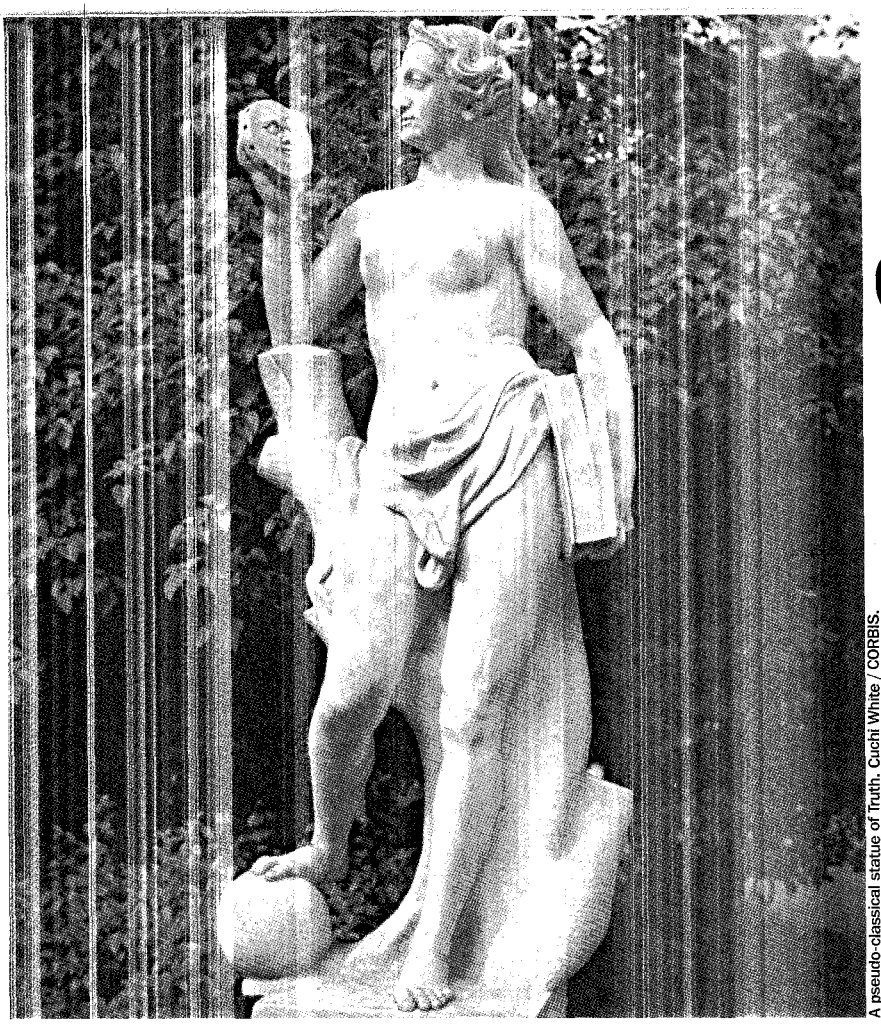
Truth Will Out

The honest philosophy of Bernard Williams.

BY THOMAS HIBBS



A pseudo-classical statue of Truth. Cuchi White / CORBIS.

What does it say about the state of the humanities, or the prospects for the intelligent defense of democracy, that leading academics in philosophy, history, and literature have for years now embraced the denial of truth as if it were the culminating stage in humanity's liberation from tyranny? Nothing good, thinks the prominent British analytic philosopher, Bernard Williams. In *Truth and Truthfulness*, Williams takes direct aim at the insouciant skepticism found in the "café politics" practiced by the "Secret Agents of literature departments."

Lambasting academia for its postmodern eschewal of truth is nothing new. In some conservative circles, it is the one sport that never goes out of season. What remain in short supply, however, are compelling and philosophically rigorous accounts of truth, its nature, function, and importance in human life. In *Truth and Truthfulness*, Williams intends to supply just such an account.

Although his investigation of truth has implications for the whole of human life, especially for the role of truth in liberal democracy, it returns repeatedly to the crisis of truth in the humanities. Williams is particularly impatient with those historical revisionists who want to dump truth along with what they call "patriarchal" history. To be taken seriously, arguments on behalf of revising our understanding of history must be seen as making claims to truth. He laments those who, instead of making truth-claims, "fall back pitifully on minority status." The denial of truth breeds irresponsibility and mediocrity in scholars, who are tempted to celebrate not so much truthful speech and accuracy in research and argument, as performance, cheering those who "saunter off with the smug nod that registers a deconstructive job neatly done."

Truth and Truthfulness
An Essay in Genealogy
by Bernard Williams
Princeton University Press, 336 pp., $27.95

All of this is welcome, but it remains quite odd that Bernard Williams would be the philosopher to come to the defense of truth. Throughout his career, he has himself been a great denier and destroyer of inflated philosophical theories, a practitioner, in the words of Alasdair MacIntyre, of philosophy as "guerrilla warfare." For many years Britain's leading moral philosopher, Williams has devoted himself with a certain gusto to the demolition of systems built by proponents of the two great modern moral systems, Kantianism and utilitarianism. Williams is a political liberal, but he nonetheless has distaste for liberal myths, including John Rawls's great project of justifying liberal society. Consistently dismissive of religion as a slowly but surely dying anachronism, Williams once compared Rawls's wager on behalf of liberalism unfavorably to Pascal's wager on the existence of God.

What's more, Williams's criticisms of neo-Kantians like Rawls are exceeded only by his pithy assaults on contemporary utilitarians, whose methods wreak havoc with the sort of moral reflection conducted by ordinary human beings. Utilitarians are resourceful in rejecting the morally repugnant consequences

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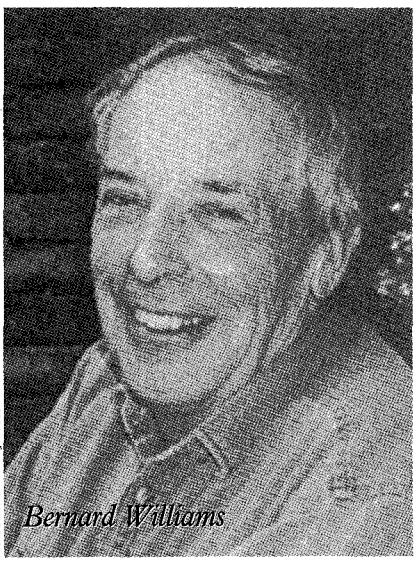
that seem to flow from their insistence upon the maximization of happiness, pleasure, or whatever they deem the highest good. So they reject the idea that maximization could ever require the murder of the innocent for the sake of quelling domestic unrest or a preference for utter strangers over beloved relatives. Take the hypothetical case where one must choose to save either a renowned pianist or one's ungifted child from a burning building. The tortured reasoning of the utilitarians for saving one's child provides the parent with "one thought too many," Williams wryly observes. Anyone who adverts to utilitarian calculation before saving his child is someone we would already find morally reprehensible.

Williams is, in fact, the great anti-theorist and anti-rationalist of our time. As befits a critic, his preferred genre is the terse philosophical essay, the most representative of which are found in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980*. His discussions of moral luck spawned the career of Martha Nussbaum, the insight for whose first big book, *The Fragility of Goodness*, came directly from Williams. His few and restrained essays on moral dilemmas have given birth to an unfortunate industry in what is now a philosophical sub-specialty.

Given the bent of his thought, he might seem a natural ally of an anti-theorist and pragmatist like Richard Rorty. But Williams derisively describes Rorty's pragmatism—with its plea that we quit "fussing" about truth and address ourselves instead to "social benefits, solidarity, democracy"—as "running on empty." He marvels at Rorty's blithe indifference to the way commitments to truthfulness are integral to the successful advancement of liberal political ideals. Williams has, moreover, never embraced the deconstruction of science as but one language game among many, let alone as a phallocentric tyranny. Indeed, Williams's ethical anti-theorism—expressed most clearly in his book *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*—rests squarely on the lack of analogy between science (with its rational methods and clear progress toward truth) and ethical discourse (where consensus is elusive and resistance to rational justification is entrenched).

Truth in the humanities, especially in history, can never achieve the clarity and consensus to which the hard sciences naturally aspire. Yet the value of truth and the virtues of truthfulness are no less operative in the humanities than in the sciences. To sort out the role of truth in our lives, Williams offers in *Truth and Truthfulness* a sort of genealogy of human society, arguing that the need for cooperation and trust in any society places a premium on truthfulness.

At this point in his argument, he seems to be claiming that truthfulness has merely instrumental value—which makes the reader wonder whether


Princeton University Press

Bernard Williams

truthfulness could still possess utility if everyone saw it as having only instrumental value. But Williams goes on to argue that uncovering the value of truth and the virtues of truthfulness requires more than the pragmatist or utilitarian can supply. One of the most telling disadvantages of theories that dispense with truth is that they cannot sustain the distinction between better and worse methods of achieving knowledge or between fantasy and reality.

Such are the defects, for example, of Richard Rorty's interpretation of a passage from George Orwell's *1984*, in which the character Winston states, "Freedom is the freedom to say two plus two equals four. If that is granted, all else follows." For Rorty, the issue here is not the freedom to speak the truth, but just the freedom to say what one thinks. While not denying the right to free speech, Williams counters that Rorty's interpretation, which "lets truth and falsity drop out," obscures what is peculiarly enslaving and heinous about an exercise of power that requires the denial of what one knows to be the case. In this case, power "subverts true belief so as to destroy the victim's relation to the world altogether, undoing the distinction between fantasy and reality."

A different sort of difficulty afflicts utilitarian accounts of the value of truth and truthfulness. Williams revisits here his earlier criticism of an influential strain of utilitarianism, which wants to foster certain kinds of dispositions or habits in individuals as being in the long run the best mechanism for maximizing the good. Aware that individuals lack the necessary information, and that they would likely crack under the strain of attempting to regulate each of their choices by the standard of maximization, utilitarians offer qualified support for dispositions to justice, truthfulness, etc. But this kind of utilitarian program is, as Williams puts it, "unstable under reflection." On the one hand, for the policy to work, individuals must really care about justice and truth. On the other hand, if they have been brought up as good utilitarians, they will be deprived of precisely this sort of attitude toward justice and truth, since they will have been instructed that these values are merely instrumental. There is a "lack of fit between the spirit being justified and the spirit of the justification" that causes the construction to unravel if it is "exposed to reflection."

The task, as Williams sees it, is to account for the intelligibility of truthfulness "without at the same time losing our hold on it." This means that we must acknowledge the intrinsic—and not merely instrumental—value of truthfulness. Williams thinks that we recognize this intrinsic value in many ways in ordinary life: in our praise of forthright speech, for instance, and in our admiration for those who want to "get things right" without regard to the

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weighing of consequences. And Williams's defense of truth's intrinsic value does not entail universal prohibitions against lying. Instead of universal prohibitions, which he dismisses as "fetishizing assertion," Williams promotes a prudential sense of what we owe in the way of truthful speech, to whom, and under what conditions.

Rather than *rules*, Williams talks of the *virtues* of truthfulness, which cluster around the dispositions of sincerity and accuracy. Truth is connected with "trust," with "fidelity, loyalty, or reliability." The question then is what "disposition does a speaker need to have if he is to be trusted to say what he believes about some matter"? Sincerity, a disposition to speak the truth in appropriate ways, is the virtue that renders one trustworthy. It does not require complete truthfulness with everyone on every occasion; conversely, it demands more than merely speaking the truth when one should. It will also entail speaking truth appropriately, for example, to a friend who needs to hear difficult news, but who needs to have the truth delivered in a compassionate way.

The other chief virtue of truthfulness is accuracy, which consists in "a desire for truth for its own sake—a passion for getting it right." It involves the use of appropriate methods of investigation, some of which are more truth-conducive than others. Williams speaks of an "economy of inquiry." Given the limited time and resources any individual can devote to discovering the truth about a particular subject, there are always questions about whether one has done enough work of the right sort to determine the truth. In this, we face all sorts of obstacles, for example, laziness and especially "desires and wishes" that "subvert the acquisition of true belief." Thus, in addition to methods of investigation, accuracy also has to do with the will, with attitudes and desires, the habits of resisting wishful thinking, self-deception, and fantasy.

The need for virtues of truthfulness is an acknowledgment on Williams's part that truth is very often a difficult achievement. We cannot rely upon some breezy faith in the free "marketplace of ideas." Williams has in mind Oliver Wendell Holmes's defense of the First Amendment as the "best test of truth." Williams counters that this would be the case only in an "idealized market." The marketplace of ideas generates all sorts of distracting noise and provides no structural context for real debate. By contrast, the scientific community, even the university community, is a "managed market." Williams is not thinking here of speech codes, but simply of the fact that to teach, or even to become a student, one has to meet certain publicly stipulated criteria. And there are, or ought to be, shared and publicly acknowledged standards for research and argumentation.

Once again, we see Williams's preoccupation with the university. Both liberals and conservatives would do well to take note of his argument on this point in *Truth and Truthfulness*. Conservatives tend to counter the liberal imposition of politically correct speech codes with appeals to freedom of speech. In some cases, this is the issue, but it is never the fundamental issue for the intellectual health of the humanities. Without an acknowledgment of the *virtues* of truthfulness, the humanities risk becoming an anarchic marketplace of ideas—a void into which political correctness marches to establish order.

Williams observes that unsettling questions about truth have been on the table at least since Nietzsche, whom Williams does an excellent job of rescuing from the often-shrill and always-dogmatic deniers of truth. *Truth and Truthfulness* addresses these questions in a clear and cogent—if, finally, no more than introductory—manner. The academic alternative to taking up the challenge of truth is not an invigorating revolutionary politics, but something rather banal. "The study of the humanities runs a risk of sliding from professional seriousness," Williams wisely observes, "through professionalization, to a finally disenchanted careerism." ♦

At Homer's Diner

Conversations with Seth Benardete.

BY MARK BLITZ

There's a joke that goes: "'Do you know where we're supposed to go?' I said, 'No.' So he said, 'Well let's go together.' That's how we met."

This joke—an all-purpose metaphor for youth, love, education, friendship, and thought—appears in *Encounters and Reflections*. The book is a remarkable collection of accounts of Seth Benardete's encounters with various people, now mostly obscure, and his reflections on topics, more obscure still. Benardete, the classical scholar and philosopher who died last year, sat down in the early 1990s with three of his students to recapture their conversations of twenty years before. The resulting discussions are both spontaneous and well ordered: a lovely achievement brought about by the editor's skill, Benardete's wizardry, and the familiarity of friends. Of course, they don't quite have the unity of one of Plato's dialogues. But it's nonetheless presumably no accident that many of them occurred in a place called Homer's Diner.

The first part of *Encounters and Reflections* treats the reader to Benardete's stories about his friends and teachers, occupants of lost worlds of scholarship and intellectual passion, with some of their attendant eccentricities: "Didn't you once tell us that Strauss didn't know how to boil water? No, that was Wachs, in the sociology of religion." Benardete's anecdotes and descriptions often are punctuated with compressed

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analyses of his colleagues' leading traits and their cause. The remarkable Allan Bloom saw the meaning of the 1960s more clearly than Benardete and had extraordinary sensitivity "to people's defects." Yet, "he got impatient if you could not say what you wanted to say in more than half a sentence," and the vanity of which he accused others (such as the late philosopher Richard Kennington) might better be attributed to Bloom himself.

In fact, Kennington's questions always seemed to Benardete "to be so much deeper than anything I was doing that I couldn't catch up" (which must make Kennington so deep as to be literally unfathomable). Benedict Einarson, a professor of classics at Chicago, "knew more than anybody else. Absolutely amazing knowledge." But "he looked like the Michelin tire ad," and "everything he said was punctuated by a laugh." Peter von Blanckenhagen, the art historian, understood himself as Goethe understood Winckelmann, "the notion of the eternal moment being preserved by the work of art," two things "completely at odds." Yet "he was eager to be accepted by people who did not have the same capacity as he did, like those who were at the top of the American archaeological profession, who were unimaginative, or imaginative in a very professional way, not like him at all." The classical historian Arnaldo Momigliano also knew everything but was never satisfied with the number of his honorary degrees. Renato Poggioli, who studied comparative literature, would always conclude his conversations by saying, "Now you see the point," more charming if less honest than Jacob Klein's characteristic "By Zeus I don't know." And that's not to mention Benardete's discussions of rats, dogs, deer, and T.S. Eliot.

There is an untold amount to learn from any of Benardete's books: works like *The Argument of the Action: Essays on Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, or *Socrates' Second Sailing: On Plato's Republic*, or *Herodotean Inquiries*. But to read them is to be forced to overcome a real denseness and compression that sometimes blocks access to them. *Encounters and Reflections* is attractive because the clear, straightforward, and charming Benardete of its first part makes us confident of the accessibility of the master magician of textual interpretation. In the second part, moreover, Benardete is still answering questions. When he says something dense about Plato's *Phaedrus* or *Republic*, his friends ask what he means, and they keep on asking until it comes clear. Robert Berman, Ronna Burger, and Michael Davis's own considerable learning and intelligence allow them the luxury here of seeming occasionally to be ignorant—and thus to ask out loud the question one sometimes mutters when reading Benardete: What could you possibly mean?

Still, the discussions in *Encounters and Reflections* are difficult. They cover

University of Chicago Press

Encounters and Reflections
Conversations with Seth Benardete
Edited by Ronna Burger
University of Chicago Press, 216 pp., $30

many poets and thinkers, chiefly Plato. We see remarkable reflections on the connection between the gods and the ideas, the political-theological problem, love and spiritedness, existence, and the good. The major theme is Benardete's view that, in ancient poetry and Plato's dialogues, the plot embodies its own logic. It cannot be explained simply as exemplifying or modifying in detailed action a formal structure or list of topics. "Well, if the Platonic dialogue and ancient poetry always have to do with the oddity of the individual, what is being reflected in these imitations is the fact that something is being disclosed in a particular that is incapable of being disclosed in any other way. It looks as if the Platonic enterprise is based on a thesis about the nature of the world—that there is something I would call the encounter with the question, which can't be determined by formula or concept."

The bulk of the book discusses this point, in various guises. The inevitable duality in things, their being what they are but not only that, is the major issue. Benardete's students press him, trying to work this problem out in specific cases. He makes clear how his initial formal analyses of books (for example, that Herodotus follows the pattern laid out in the Divided Line of Plato's *Republic*) is modified by his new understanding. Needless to say, we can clarify this understanding more completely only by reading Benardete's other works, and the books he is discussing.

A second theme of *Encounters and Reflections* is the idea of "beginning"—beginning to think and to learn. Benardete sketches throughout his remarks a notion of how original questions, perplexities, or crises launch inquiries that when pursued uncover the deeper cause of what has launched them. The Greek discovery of the singularity of nature over the multiplicity of laws, conventions, and cultures is the necessary condition for the philosophical quest. Yet, the individuality of one's beginning retains a certain independence. The particular is not wholly subsumed in the general, practice not wholly subsumed in theory, the lover not wholly subsumed in what is loved. Socrates' political philosophy puts philosophy in crisis by involving it with political risk and desire for what is best for oneself. This seeking of what is good here and now, and not just what is good generally, keeps philosophy alive.

Encounters and Reflections not only discusses the importance of the individual, it exemplifies it. In fact, the occasional and accidental element in things may make us despair over our own condition. We apparently have nothing with which to replace the marvelous combination of accidents—academic parents, undergraduate friends such as Stanley Rosen and Bloom, attention to the great books, and the presence of Leo

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Strauss—that helped make Benardete what he was. Indeed, given the state of the academy today, we may well wonder whether the passion of the scholar that he exemplified will *ever* revive. Intense and brilliant thought may still exist, but will it again be as significant individually or as dominant generally as once it was? One by one our intellectual giants disappear, and their memories seem to shrivel in the gloomy and endless cave of our mediocrity.

It is more hopeful to say instead that in books like this they continue to glow. The humor and intelligence in Seth Benardete's *Encounters and Reflections* make us long for the world it remembers.

This world can be recovered because none of the elements that constitutes it is simply an accident. Each reflects or exemplifies things more lasting: love, friendship, natural wonder, intellect, and courage. ♦

Painted Words

Why poets want to paint, and painters want to write poetry. **BY THOMAS M. DISCH**

Back in the 1960s, when I was in my twenties, it seemed that all my friends who were writers were married to painters. I never doubted then that, of the two callings, literature was the nobler and required more brains. Was there a Nobel Prize for painting? Painting suited the more earthy and sensual nature of women. The fact that there were so few famous women painters was an accident of history. Men were writers and women painters in the same essential way that all dogs are boys and all cats girls.

That was an error, I realize now. Writers are drawn to painters as yin to yang, sweet to sour, soft to hard. And sometimes—indeed, more frequently in this promiscuous age—they aspire not just to cohabit but to arrogate to themselves the attributes of the other art form. Picasso and Marsden Hartley and Larry Rivers published their poems and playlets, while Victor Hugo and D.H. Lawrence and A.R. Ammons put their paintings on the auction block. There is no official census of the poets and painters who have transgressed the boundaries between their arts, but it easily exceeds those who have been seen to do so in public.

I know this because I confess to being one of the transgressors. Twice in my life, first in the early 1980s and again, with even more abandon, this last year, I have left off writing full-time in order to paint. As a result I feel I have a Teiresian insight into the painterly life that most lifelong painters themselves have forgotten or taken for granted: chiefly, the sheer glory. Surely, it is no accident that so much of the earliest Italian painting is given over to angels and depictions of heaven, until all the domes and cupolas and barrel-roofs in Christendom have become one glowing Baroque cloudland of painterly joy. This is not the usual narrative of the "Progress of Painting" that one learns in Art 101, but I think it sums it up at least as well as the triumph of the laws of perspective and anatomy.

Dancing in the Wind
Poetry and the Art of the British Isles
edited by Charles Sullivan
Harry N. Abrams, 144 pp., $29.95

Seeing Venice
Bellotto's Grand Canal
by Mark Doty
Getty Trust, 64 pp., $14.95

Poetry Comics
An Animated Anthology
by Dave Morice
Teachers & Writers, 136 pp., $16.95

Thomas M. Disch is the author, most recently, of The Castle of Perseverance: Job Opportunities in Contemporary Poetry.

Publishers feel a similar impulse to unite the two realms, but their efforts at matchmaking are usually botched. A case in point, a thirty-dollar anthology of poems and color plates from Abrams, one of the mainstays of art publishing, called *Dancing in the Wind: Poetry and the Art of the British Isles*, edited by Charles Sullivan, a gentleman with a Ph.D. in social psychology who has edited ten other "anthologies of literature," all published by Abrams. The book, not unnaturally, is dedicated "to Paul Gottlieb, my publisher." It is a run-of-the-mill coffee-table book that mashes together a lot of old poetic chestnuts with an equal quantity of old painterly chestnuts: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways," for example, with Arthur Hughes's *April Love*, the painterly equivalent of a Bette Davis movie. The editorial contribution is a brief note facing the color plate: "Owned for a time by William Morris, this romantic painting includes symbols of eternal life (the ivy) as well as love's transience (the fallen rose petals)."

Another pairing, of a poem by Philip Larkin and a portrait by Lucian Freud, is glossed: "Freud portrays an interesting face, but he gives no hint of what the young man might be thinking." This is a blandness scarcely worth the bother of reprimanding. Sliced out of the book and pinned to a bulletin board, the plates should serve the basic purpose that Horace refers to in his often-cited lines on the subject: *As with paintings, so with poetry: Some are best seen close up, others from across the room*. The across-the-room gestalt conveyed by a reduced image on glossy paper is all you can hope for in even the best art book, so it is easy to ignore the editorial piffle. Sullivan's selections are commendably eclectic within the range of all that is curious, agreeable, and well behaved. But it does not in any single instance address the question of what poetry and painting may have in common, except insofar as they may be *about* an Irish fellow with an interesting face.

The Getty Museum in Los Angeles offers a much better-considered hybrid of art book and (if not poetry) a poet's silken prose: *Seeing Venice: Bellotto's*

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Picasso's The Old Guitarist

Art Institute of Chicago

Grand Canal, an essay by Mark Doty, a pocket-sized study of a single painted view of Venice diced up into a little anthology of details, with a complementary sheaf of reflections on Venice and Bellotto's artistry and life. On the evidence of this jewelbox of semi-precious pensées, Doty would be an ideal companion with whom to visit any painting, and if he sometimes swells with a Jamesian afflatus, that would seem to be the job the Getty paid him to do.

Still, Doty's *Seeing Venice* tells us no more about the connection, if any, between painting and poetry than that a good writer can turn his eloquence to the praise and elucidation of good paintings. But even when done in verse, as in Auden's well-known poem "Musée des Beaux Arts,"

> *About suffering they were never wrong,*
> *The Old Masters; how well, they understood*
> *Its human position; how it takes place*
> *While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along,*

such a tribute usually exploits the object of its art to draw its own, extraneous moral. Breughel's painting is no better, or worse, for Auden's adducing his moral, which in fact is only a half-truth at best: If the Old Masters are never wrong about suffering, and that suffering takes place before a largely indifferent audience, then what of all those pietàs and crucifixions that insist on the attention of the entire universe? About suffering young poets are so often wrong.

There is another and more customary way for a painting and a poem to connect, and that is when the poet is allowed the first move, and the painter then illustrates, elaborates, or ornaments the poem. This process has yielded Gustave Doré's and Robert Rauschenberg's Dantes, as well as mountains of the kind of kitsch that has made "illustration" a pejorative. A classic sample of the latter appeared in 1996 as *The Oxford Treasury of Classic Poems*, assembled by Michael Harrison and Christopher Stuart-Clark, who attached the wan watercolors of some ten pedestrian children's book illustrators to poems in a mix that should inoculate young readers against poetry for the rest of their lives.

Even artists and poets of attested competence can fail to play viable duets together, usually through simple laziness or lack of a compelling motive. Frank O'Hara "collaborated" with some of the best of the abstract expressionists, but often that meant no more than his scrawling a few words on fine paper and the artists' daubing on some of their own ink around the "poem" they'd been given as a launch pad. One suspects that the artists were doing him a favor, their daubs having so much greater cash value than a poet's words.

The other three founding members of the New York School of Poetry also had friends and collaborators among the best artists of the era. James Schuyler was virtually adopted by Fairfield Porter, and his visage is found in many Porter paintings. Perhaps no other poet of the same stature has sat so often and with such happy results. Kenneth Koch ventured on collaborations with both Larry Rivers and Alex Katz, who responded to the challenge with a wit and a whimsy to equal the poet's, but there is also a whiff of arm-wrestling to their projects, an undercurrent of "Anything you can do, I can do better."

Looming behind the painterly proclivities of the New York School poets is the ghost of the poet whose association with painters was to become the stuff of legend, Gertrude Stein. Stein did not collaborate with painters, but she did commission her portrait from Picasso and squeezed a masterpiece from him. No poet has ever *owned* such a quantity of famous art. But she also tried, in various ways, to accomplish in poetry what the Modernist painters of France were doing in oils—not just in the disjunctive disassemblies of *Tender Buttons* and the portraits of Picasso and Matisse, but also in the faux-naive artlessness of *Melanctha* (think of Picasso's appropriations of primitive African sculpture) and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. In the latter, immediately popular work, she prefigured the "hard-boiled," minimalist style that would soon dominate American writing. More than any other writer she engineered the regime change from the regnant rotundities of the Jamesian style to a plainness approximating the "clinical" look of analytic cubism.

This was the "Red Wheelbarrow" aspect of her art, an as-yet-unconcentrated version of William Carlos Williams's famous little poem—or rather, manifesto—that begins: *so much depends / upon / a red wheel / barrow*. How much, in fact, does depend upon a red wheelbarrow glazed with rain water? Is it enough to point one's finger and say, "There, beside those white chickens," and one has a poem, or a painting? To judge by the practice of both painters and poets in the twentieth century, the answer would seem to be a qualified yes, the qualification being that radical minimalism seems a more viable tactic for

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painters than for poets. Red wheelbarrows and white chickens have sufficed for representational artists from Matisse to Diebenkorn, but words seem to need to point to more than paint does. Witness the fizzle of the barebones extremes of Aram Saroyan (who would abandon his one-word "poems" of the 1970s with an embarrassed shrug) and the Language poets. By and large it has been "visual artists" like Jenny Holzer and Ed Ruscha who have taken up the task of emptying art's red wheelbarrow of all superfluous meaning except the simple imperative of the aesthetic id, "Be Mine!" And the world has pretty much agreed: It's theirs.

Imagination is the y-axis on the graph of modernist art—but its x-axis is art's service as a mirror. Pablo Picasso painted a famous painting of a man with a blue guitar, and Wallace Stevens subsequently wrote a famous poem that declares, *Things as they are / Are changed upon the blue guitar*. What exactly that blue guitar is, and what its Orphic tunes can do, shifts from stanza to stanza of Stevens's poem, but we have the author's own assurance that his ever-shifting blue guitar has to do with "the incessant conjunctions between things as they are and things imagined."

Or . . . whatever. For in the Protean flow of the imagination, in its flashes and flickerings, whatever we can think of has its turn in the continuum of eternity's infinite slideshow. The skin of water on Hockney's pools, the blasts of yellow and swoons of lavender across Monet's lilypond at Giverny, the sumptuous roses and ochres soaking into Frankenthaler's linens; yes, then there's Turner, Whistler, and anyone else who ever visited Venice; Klee in Tunisia, Gauguin in Tahiti.

On the other side of the mirror, working with the other side of the brain but swept along in the same flow, we can hear in poetry the chattering of John Ashbery, the ever-expatiating drone of Emily Dickinson, the throngs of mute inglorious teenagers in their sullen bedrooms, strumming their own blue guitars. All that is formless, amorphous, cloudlike, and exalted: *The vivid, florid, turgid sky, / The drenching thunder rolling by, / The morning deluged still by night, / The clouds tumultuously bright*, as Wallace Stevens put it in "The Man with the Blue Guitar."

The poet who has most capably performed the duties Stevens set was A.R. Ammons, who was as ready as J.M.W. Turner to take on the ocean and the sky, which he has done in match after match. Not coincidentally he is also the most capable and ambitious painter among contemporary poets. (Happily, thanks to computer graphics and the Internet, his work can be viewed in digital simulation at the website of his gallery, *Saltimbanque.com*.) As a painter, Ammons must be ranked above amateur, but even his best work is not of museum caliber.

The work available for purchase (at modest middle-hundred prices) is chiefly watercolors deriving from color-field and minimalist painters of the 1960s and 1970s, his own mid-career years as a poet. They show Ammons confronting a Nature as abstract as that which he apostrophizes in such grand-meditation poems as "Corson's Inlet," a nature of torsions and boundaries and equilibriums more than of trees and wheelbarrows and white chickens. What his paintings mostly lack is the easy Whitmanian camaraderie of the poems, the punny playfulness and quicksilver wordplay, the sort of thing that Klee accomplishes in painting so gracefully without ever losing hold of "the larger picture." As a painter Ammons has the stiff good manners of a student pianist whose eyes never leave the score.

Even with that reservation, Ammons has a better batting average as a painter than his nearest American rival as poet-painter, e.e. cummings. (You can judge for yourself by visiting *www.eecummingsart.com*.) Cummings has all the qualities one admires and envies in an enthusiastic amateur: brio and a willingness to imitate anyone at least once. His portraits and landscapes can be agreeable and expressive, but they rarely convey the aesthetic jolt that compels a second look. They have the earmarks of a familiar kind of failed art, a bohemian garishness that would like to be accounted bold. And they have the unfortunate effect of making one wonder whether his *poetry* is quite up to par.

The estate of e.e. cummings

e.e. cummings's Stripper #5

Unfair as it may be, it is hard to resist using the one art as a litmus test for the other. Who can keep from sensing a tawdriness and fustian in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poetry after a survey of his mawkish and religiose paintings? Who is not inclined to pay closer attention to Blake's prophetic books after seeing his engravings? Sometimes only a single painting or sketch can do the trick. I remember visiting the lately bereaved widow of John Berryman in Minneapolis in 1973. On the wall of the entrance hall was a large drawing of a tangle of woodland plants seen close up. At a glance it seemed as good as any of Ben Shahn's illustrations for *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet*. My esteem rose quite as though I'd seen a bronze statue of Berryman in the park.

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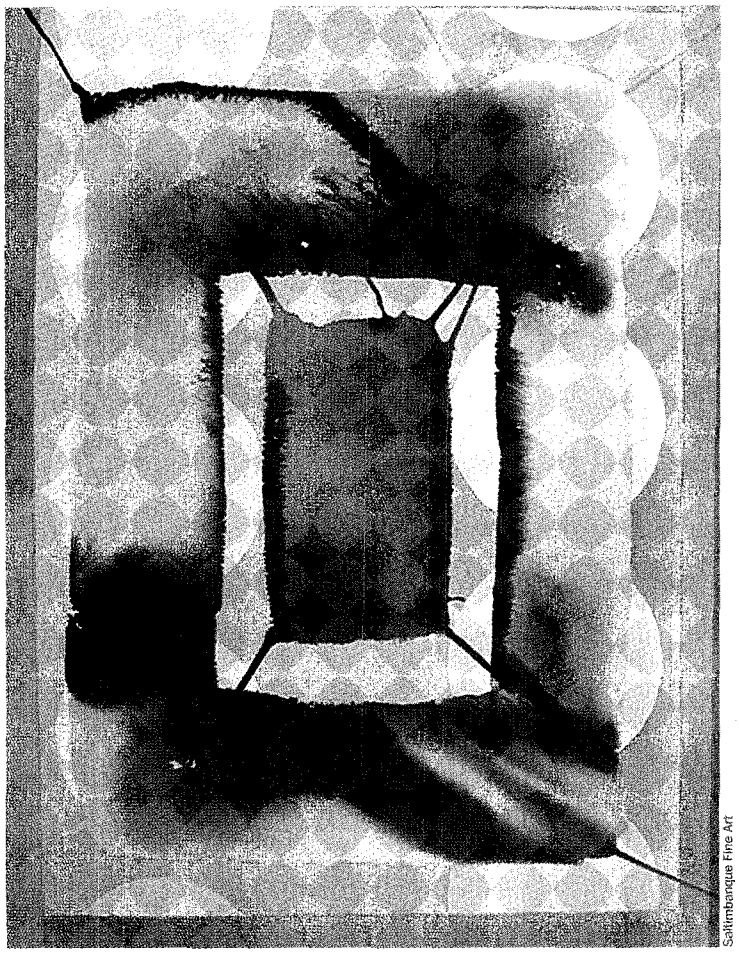

Saltimbanque Fine Art

A.R. Ammons's Composition #37

I can think of few instances of the converse possibility: painters who have shown a gift for poetry. Whistler produced a book of epigrams, and other artists have collected their obiter dicta of varying degrees of pith and vinegar. Cellini wrote a classic autobiography, and Michelangelo did, indeed, write poetry that has stood the test of time. But more recently? Well, there is the American modernist painter Marsden Hartley (1877-1943), who did manage to have eight poems of his own squeezed into the same volume of the Library of America's anthology of American Poetry that includes the work of William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens. But though I am easily cowed by an imprint so august, I cannot for the life of me believe Hartley's poems have been included for sheer merit. It was the paintings that got him through the door. Genius has its perks.

In any case, most part-time painters paint for the fun of it—fun, in the sense that the pleasure principle is in charge. This is borne out by the kinds of poets who seem most disposed to amuse themselves with other Muses. Their poetry and canvases may run the gamut of styles and schools, but they all tend to be prodigal and brimful. D.H. Lawrence was an excellent self-taught painter with an instant grasp of modernism's primary lesson with respect to painting, "Anyone can do this." He is also a hit-or-miss, slap-dash poet who accumulated a hefty *Collected Poems* in his moments between novels.

Perhaps a large percentage of all writers are visual artists, and we just never hear about it. But when I've asked various poets and novelists outright, their usual reply is an embarrassed demur, and when a pencil is put in their reluctant fingers the result is a stick figure so crude one suspects their klutziness is deliberate, a way of defending their fragile self-esteem.

A writer who screws his courage to the sticking place and lets the left hemisphere of his brain take charge is often rewarded with seance-like results. James Thurber's cartooning is the locus classicus. Cartooning, indeed, has been the traditional side entrance to the realm of art for those who are intimidated by the stairs and pillars in front.

In the recent past, when newspaper comic strips and comic books were a part of daily life, most kids went through a phase of do-it-yourself cartooning. The last, juicy fruit of that era ripened in the 1960s, when "underground" comics appeared on the scene with their amalgam of pop art and artless raunch.

High on the topmost branch of that heritage grew Dave Morice's *Poetry Comics*. It appeared originally in the 1970s as a mimeo magazine, as well as in the pages of the more unbuttoned little magazines. Assembled in a hardcover anthology from Simon and Schuster in 1982, it has more recently been recollected in a paperback from Teachers & Writers Collaborative. In *Poetry Comics*, Morice has joined the small but select company of cartoonists—Crumb, Spiegelman—whose work transcends its low-brow origins to become, if not high art, then at least art on a par with Saul Steinberg or the funkier pop artists. There is, indeed, a direct line of descent from the poets and painters of the New York School (Koch, O'Hara, Katz, Rivers), through its St. Mark's Church-centered second generation (Berrigan, Padgett, Brainerd), and down to a third generation sprinkled in Iowa City and other writerly enclaves, of which Dave Morice is the epitome in his easy conflation of high and low, east and west, au courant and aw-shucks.

For example, there's Morice's treatment of Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" as the dialogue of two stick-figure mice, Lippo and Lisa, in which Browning's language vies with Morice's drawing as to which is more elegantly faux. Or there's "The Adventures of Whitman," in which the great gray poet's ego morphs into a superman, whose speech balloon declares (in the words of *Leaves of Grass*), *From Paumanok starting I fly like a bird, speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars*. Read in a less-than-reverent frame of mind, Whitman's effusions can come across as a series of Bonk! Boing! pratfalls.

Such appropriations are said to be the hallmark of postmodernism, and looking at Morice's treatment of one or another familiar quotation from the realms of gold, one understands why there have to be copyright laws. If there were not, then every windbag in that realm would be skewered like Polonius. What Morice has learned from Picasso (and Thurber and Crumb and Disney) is how to read old poems with an innocent, lateral vision that seems to make them new.

About painting—about writing poems for that matter—Morice has the right attitude. It's nothing to be fussed about. We all do it in our dreams, don't we? The trick lies in remembering how when we're awake. ♦

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"'You did it,' she said. 'I did not,' he replied. 'Did so,' she insisted. 'Did not,' he demurred. 'Did so,' she countered. 'Did not,' he refuted. 'Did so,' she charged. 'Did not,' he objected. 'Did so,' she accused. 'Did not,' he denied. 'Did so,' she disputed. 'Did not,' he argued."

Amusing Guy

***Beneath the Axis of Evil: One Man's Journey into the Horrors of War* by Neal Pollack (So New Media, 64 pp. $10).** This winter, the more radical of the two Seattle-based alternative weeklies, the *Stranger*, took to running long essays about war in Iraq. Various lefty voices have sounded off in its pages, including Christopher Hitchens (pro-war) and Sherman Alexie (antiwar).

Stranger editor Dan Savage asked Neal Pollack, the self-designated "Greatest Living American Writer," to speak up for the apathy faction by penning a piece entitled "Who Cares?" Pollack initially refused on the grounds that "I do care, and I'd be an idiot if I didn't." How could readers "really want to hear what I think?"

But as he considered the question, he began to wonder whether readers want to hear what *any* writer thinks about the war. Thus began what became last month a widely noticed, three-thousand-word rant that told writers on both sides to "shut the hell up!" Part of the fallout of September 11, Pollack declared, "has been an explosion of absolutely terrible writing." Andrew Sullivan, Peggy Noonan, Bill Maher, Poets Against War, and Hendrik Hertzberg were among those on the receiving end of a series of vicious literary smackdowns.

In an otherwise unsparing essay, however, Pollack somewhat contradictorily carved out an exception for the writing immediately following September 11. "Even at its worst," he explained, "it was somehow cathartic and sweet, even necessary." "Cathartic," "sweet," and "necessary" are not adjectives one would use to characterize Pollack's latest collection, *Beneath the Axis of Evil: One Man's Journey into the Horrors of War*.

Unfortunately, even "funny"—Pollack's trademark—may not be completely appropriate. "Mildly amusing" seems closer to the mark. The book stitches together several pieces (most written for the *New York Press*) into a disjointed narrative. The hero is "Neal Pollack," a courageous American adventure writer ("with a chest made of brick"), alterego of plain vanilla Neal Pollack. *Beneath the Axis of Evil* begins on September 11 in New York and ends in October 2002 in Iraq, where the hero slips starving children $20 bills and tells them to prepare for sweet death rained down from above. In between, "Pollack" travels to such exotic locales as Afghanistan, Israel, and Wisconsin, having sex along the way with many famous women and interviewing Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Jimmy the Jihad Chicken.

In certain circles, Pollack is famous for his riffs on pop culture, and the madcap adventures of his alter ego are used to mock figures in the news: gullible Western liberals, crazy Islamic militants, paranoid government bureaucrats, as well as people convinced that fascism has descended on America. "Pollack" escapes death several times because the Islamofascists recognize him as the author of *The Secret Pleasures of Fundamentalism* and *America is Evil and Wrong*, as well as numerous articles in *Details* and *Harper's*. The American government twice detains him for having dangerous views. But nothing proves effective in breaking his spirit, except locking him in a prison cell with Susan Sontag, "or the thing that used to be Susan Sontag." As she "moved toward me, tongue extended, I raced for the door and banged on it frantically. 'Terrorists are cowards!' I shouted. 'George W. Bush is a man transformed! Irony is dead! Oh please let me out!'"

Funny as this is, much of the humor feels forced and, what's worse, tired. Jeff Koyen, new editor at the *New York Press*, recently wrote that "Pollack may have had his day—I think it was a Wednesday, sometime back in 1999—but if that boy doesn't diversify but quick, he'll be a footnote in no time." Pollack has found some recent notoriety for his *Stranger* essay on babbling writers. But he needs to grow and find an adult topic before he tries another book.

—Jeremy Lott

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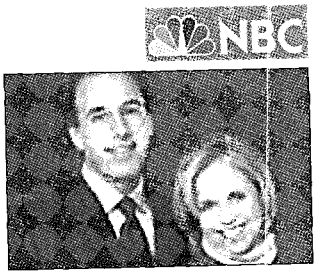
"Network news anchors tackle war coverage."

—*News item*

Parody

The Today Show



Transcript

April 1, 2003

COURIC: Matt, I notice we're only using F-14s and F-16s in this war. Isn't it time we pulled out some of the higher numbers? Something in the mid-twenties, perhaps, maybe even an F-30 or two?

LAUER: Absolutely, Katie. Many of the people I've spoken to here in Guitar are using 32 or even 64. There's been a lot of rethinking. I'm using 64 on my nose, but a 16 on my cheeks and the top of my head because I can't get the sunblock through my hair stubble.

COURIC: No, I'm talking about military equipment, Matt. I mean, isn't everything falling apart . . . a quagmire . . . Vietnam? We just had retired Air Force Admiral Tubby McFaul, and he said we were totally unprepared for the Iraqi RPMs and their ack-ack . . .

LAUER: Gesundheit, Katie. Yes, there's a lot of talk here in Quitter about the M-1/A-1 Bradley Fighting Apache Vehicle . . .

COURIC: You mean we have a vehicle named after a steak sauce?

LAUER: Yes, and it's a big problem because as you know cows are sacred in Muslim culture. But as I was saying, many people here in Kotter are upset because the Apache name seems insensitive to Native Americans . . .

COURIC: Isn't that one of the reasons the Iraqi people hate us, because we're insensitive to their culture? I mean, I've heard that 80 percent of Iraqis are Sunni Muslims, which is a form of sun worship, but the ruling elite are mostly Shiitake . . .

LAUER: Exactly, Katie, like the mushrooms. But like I was saying, one of the big surprises for the U.S. military is the ease with which the Iraqis have been able to take us out with friendly fire and Triple As.

COURIC: Triple As?

LAUER: Yes, you see, as one military briefer told me in private, they sneak up disguised as tow trucks, and they're so close we can't use our cloaking devices . . .

COURIC: Thank you. That was Matt Lauer in Dooha, Cuttairr.

LAUER: No, it's Doha, Gutter.

COURIC: Doodah?

LAUER: Doah. I mean Doha . . .

COURIC: And we'll be right back with National Geographic's Peter Arnett and his favorite recipes using low-fat hummus. Stay with us.

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Designer Genes: Will They Wash?

Henry I. Miller, M.D., is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

A success [illegible] gene [illegible] enabled scientists to create significantly smarter mice, demonstrating that a seemingly minor genetic alteration can improve performance on a wide range of learning and memory tasks. Aside from being bad news for cats, **the success of gene therapy for purposes of "enhancement" heightens the debate about the ethics of making designer humans.**

Gene therapy, the introduction of new genes into an animal or a human, can be performed for two purposes. Most commonly, physicians try to correct genetic or acquired disorders by getting the new genes to synthesize missing or defective gene products. But it can also be used for nontherapeutic purposes, such as overcoming baldness or enabling us to run faster.

Joe Tsien, the Princeton University molecular biologist who led the mouse-improvement research, has posed some ethical questions raised by genetic enhancement. "There will be issues of access and who can afford it. Whether the social wealthy class will have the intellectual advantage over poor people, these are real questions coming down the road."

But society already has come to terms with similar issues. Gene therapy for enhancement should be considered in light of society's permissiveness toward experimental medical and surgical interventions in general and those intended for nontherapeutic purposes in particular. Cosmetic surgery is performed for all sorts of nontherapeutic purposes. Drugs are frequently used for relatively trivial indications, such as modest obesity, age spots, and baldness. And there have been numerous clinical trials of appetite suppressants, memory- and performance-enhancing drugs, and human growth hormone for hormonally normal but shorter-than-average children.

Patients' psychological well-being and freedom to choose are also important considerations. "Mere" enhancement is not trivial to the adolescent boy who is six inches shorter than anyone else in his class or to many people of either sex who suffer hair loss. One need look no further than the huge societal demand for cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, and health clubs to be reminded how important people consider it is to look and feel good.

The issues surrounding whether a patient suffers from a condition that warrants treatment, the kinds and magnitude of risks, equal access to therapy, and the relationship between medical intervention and discrimination are fundamentally no different for gene therapy than for other interventions. Therefore, **innovations such as gene therapy, even when used for enhancement, should be treated similarly to other analogous medical and quasi-medical interventions**, except as scientific considerations may dictate.

The Economist asked in an editorial, "What of genes that might make a good body better, rather than make a bad one good? Should people be able to retrofit themselves with extra neurotransmitters to enhance various mental powers, to change the color of their skin, or lift heavier weights?" Its libertarian answer, "Yes, they should. Within some limits, people have a right to make what they want of their lives."

In view of what people want and what society permits in other realms, should not those limits be very wide?

— Henry I. Miller, M.D.

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